Film Quarterly

FILM CULTURE | DIGITAL | BOOKS & DVDS

BRUNO DUMONT'S *FLANDERS*

DWOSKIN, MIZOGUCHI, VARDA

A CANON OF ONLINE VIDEOS

THE LIVES OF OTHERS

REVISITING NAZI CINEMA

Fall 2007 Volume 61 Number 1
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A PUBLIC PLACE

Change is best undertaken with a plainly stated purpose in sight. The new formats that are visible in this issue are meant to enhance *Film Quarterly*'s appeal to people who think seriously about movies, whether they do so inside or outside the academy. The crucial premise is that readability can be increased without compromising intellectual rigor—for surely compact lucidity, and indeed eloquence, are intellectual virtues.

All contributions now conform to well-defined length parameters. These limits are not bureaucratic contrivances, let alone short cuts; they are effective tools for promoting the fluency that befits a scholarly magazine which addresses a broad audience. Lengthy academic writing, no matter how brilliant, is often excessively demanding of a non-specialist reader's time and so it may simply not be read by such a person. If inclusive communication is a priority—as in the present context it must be—then succinctness is a special virtue.

And so as well as timely essays of about three thousand words, book reviews, and articles, *Film Quarterly* now includes columns, each of them with a clear brief. This "Editor's Notebook" outlines the issue's contents, explains policy where it is helpful to do so, and notes some films that are not otherwise covered. "Marx and Coca-Cola" comments on recent theatrical releases. "Hollywood Notebook" offers a director's reflections on filmmaking. "Camera Ludica" deals with games and gaming, "Two-point-Zero" with Internet video. "Counterspectacles" and "Second Time Around" are DVD columns—the one concerned with non-mainstream work, the other with reissues—while "Browsed" consists of short book notices.

The new formats and emphasis on concision are intended to improve accessibility. The model is something like a civic meeting—a structured forum for conversation and contention in which seminar-room topics mingle with wider debates. It should be a forum where there is more heat than smoke, more panache than pedantry, where well-argued dissent routs dogma, but above all it has to be welcoming to both general and professional readers.

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The wider question of change in film culture is inseparable from digital technologies, which are shifting what we mean when we speak of "movies." In addition to new production and distribution practices, the increasing commercial influence of the games industry and the proliferation of online moving images, especially streaming video with accompanying "peer-to-peer" commentary, are significant. Several contributions to this issue are concerned with digital matters, the most in-depth of them being Lucas Hilderbrand's article about the vast and interactive storehouse of clips that is YouTube.

Discussing what online clip-viewing entails and how it is affected by copyright considerations, Hilderbrand does not fail to refer to specific works (under the rubric of a clip canon): the stress on new screen media does not indicate a downgrading of *Film Quarterly*'s policy emphasis on interpretation and close analysis. Nor is cinema history to be neglected. Kelley Conway's investigation of the reception of *Cleo from 5 to 7*, D. A. Miller's rereading of *Sansho the Bailiff*, and Johannes Von Moltke's essay on books about Nazi cinema underline a reaffirmed commitment to historical research and re-evaluation.

We continue to cover notable films that in some way work against marginalization, as do *The Namesake*, which depicts Indian diaspora life in New York, and *Days of Glory*, which seeks to reclaim from historical obscurity the actions of African soldiers who fought for France in World War II. Additionally, Adrian Martin offers a reassessment of Stephen Dwoskin's cinema, which is often preoccupied with the filmmaker's own disability. In so doing, Martin makes the case for *Behindert* (*Hindered*) to be considered as "one of the greatest works in cinema history."

⁂

Robert De Niro's disappointing CIA saga, *The Good Shepherd*, encapsulates themes that have been unmissable in films lately: infiltration, suspicion, treachery. "There's a stranger in the house," as Edward Wilson (Matt Damon) puts it. *Notes on a Scandal* also explores this territory, as does *The Last King of Scotland*.

The Lives of Others, a breakthrough first feature with one of the best-constructed endings of recent years, pictures an espionage state—a state run on suspicion, a house with bugged walls and strangers literally skulking in the attic. A combination of Hitchcockian surveillance thriller, arthouse melodrama, and moral fable, *The Lives of Others* has delighted audiences and won its director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck not only the Academy Award for best foreign lan-

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Imperial finery in *Curse of the Golden Flower.* © 2006 Universal Studios

guage film, but also a U.S. remake deal. In his review essay, Matthew H. Bernstein elaborates the means, notably a multiplicitous use of irony, by which the film builds to an extraordinary emotional crescendo.

Do the intrigue, hostility, and deceit that abound in current films relate to iniquity in the public sphere? Probably they do, but, as Joshua Clover suggests overleaf, analyzing popular culture in these terms is not very enlightening at the moment. Maybe the cinematic motif of domestic danger is less an allegory than a diffuse cultural worry about trustworthiness that keeps being recycled and restyled.

28 Weeks Later and *Curse of the Golden Flower* are cases in point. In both of them violent fathers are chief agents of strife; but *28 Weeks Later*'s Don (Robert Carlyle) is a rabid, mangy mongrel dog, whereas Emperor Ping (Yun-Fat Chow) is a lion with a pomaded mane. Though there is precious little natural light on show in either film, that similarity is incidental: *28 Weeks Later* is often firelit and scary like a "survival horror" video game, while *Curse of the Golden Flower* glows with ceremonially gaudy palatial ornament. The differences are syntactic also: the cutting in *28 Weeks Later* is bewilderingly fast, whereas much of *Curse of the Golden Flower* is stately. Its most outrageous violence unfolds in slow motion, Ping's hair falling gently over his face as he gets ready to bludgeon his youngest son to death.

In their different ways, these two films are exhilarating because of histrionics and visual flair. They both careen enjoyably toward melodrama or even black comedy, and meanwhile whatever rickety allegory there is gets swept away in the aesthetic mayhem.

⁂

Days of Glory and 2006 Cannes Grand Prix-winner *Flanders*, however, the one specifically rooted in history, the other deliberately vague in its connotations (there is war, but it is not clear where or when it is taking place, or even if it is a fantasy), are two French films with an outright claim on political significance. For Emma Wilson, they amount to a heartening revival of the radical cinema of Alain Resnais (now eighty-five, whose own most recent work, *Private Fears in Public Places*, is out now on DVD).

Flanders ends on a note of unexpected tenderness; a solemn, silent private ceremony of reconciliation concludes *The Lives of Others*. Internecine conflict does not entirely carry the day, even in those films taken up with it. Elsewhere, the nature of lasting affectionate ties is the subject of *The Namesake*, as Deepika Bahri emphasizes in her essay on the film, and surrogate family bonds hold together the monastic community documented in *Into Great Silence*, which longtime contributor William Johnson reviews with an apt calm lucidity.

Rob White

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO WAR

The problems war presents film columnists are negligible by any human measure. But by the measure of Cultural Studies, the problems are near-absolute. War is war in part because it has the force to warp the world around it, even at a great distance, so thoroughly that every third song, advert, or movie seems to be *about* the war. In times of crisis, we must all decide again and again to notice the obvious: the sphere of culture is always "based on a true story."

Hence this version of film criticism seems of late like child's play. The geopolitics decoder ring always works, and with a minimum of twiddles: 1-2-3 Baghdad! (Alternately, the count can go 9-11-New York!) Cinematic administrations are always dummies for the current regimes; villains, once mere criminals, now tend toward self-serving ideologues, worshipping at the altar of blow-stuff-up-ism. When we go out at night, terror is the order of the day.

What's dubious is whether the forcing factory of the present has made the films any better. Much less improved the reviews. But there is no wishing it away; history is a nightmare from which movies cannot awaken. The least (perhaps the only) thing one can do is ask what films of the current killing season have made something interesting of history's most recent maneuvers, and how? And try not to feel too proud of ourselves for discovering a subtext that can't help but be there.

While *The Host* (original title *Gwoemul*, Joon-ho Bong, 2006) is surely as allegorically resonant as any Anglophone horror film, it resists schematic interpretation through something like a surplus of subtext (just as the monster has a surplus of appendages, hard to gather in all at once). Indeed, it's not always clear what's happening in the moment. Near the climax, the heroic family confronts the beast in the midst of what seems to be a protest, or festival, or both; it may have to do with the monster, or the government, or neither.

The family's escaped from government quarantine, and now must pool their talents—the cinematic shorthand for collective action—to rescue the captive youngest child. Everyone finally brings their particular gift to bear on the task at hand (big sister is an Olympic archer, natch)—all except for Nam-il (Hae-il Park), who sacrificed and went to college

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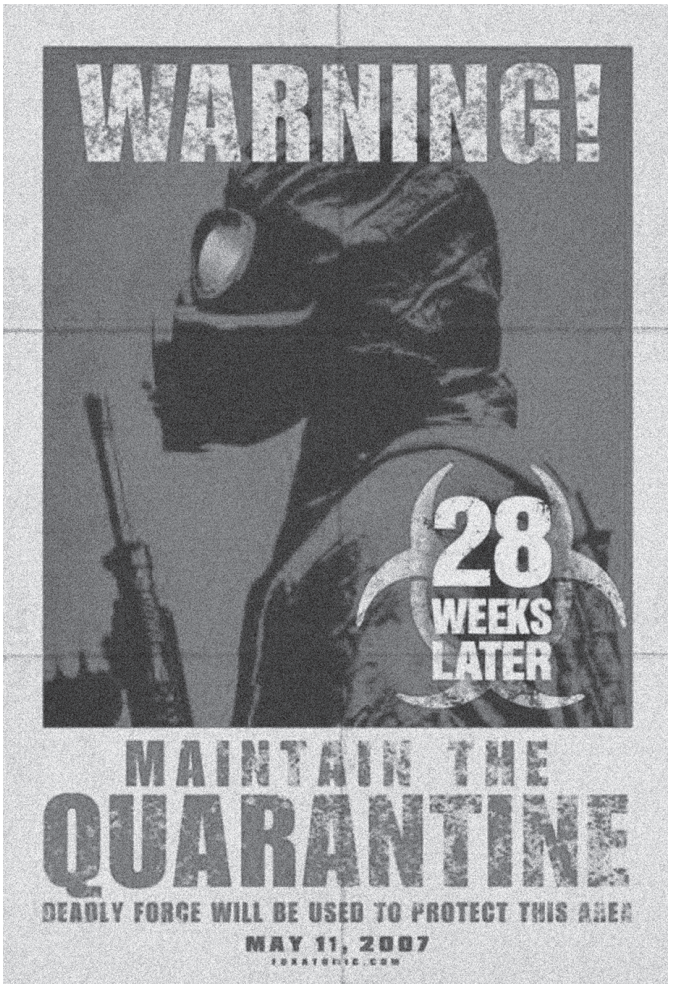

Teaser poster for the theatrical release of *28 Weeks Later*. © 2007 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

and as a result is unemployed and useless. Or so he says in a self-pitying and perplexing monologue. But as he discovers in crisis, he has learned exactly the one thing he needs to know, the one thing every Korean learns at university, apparently: how to prepare and lob a Molotov cocktail. It turns out that terror (or is that counterterror?) is now part of the basic middle-class skill set.

More precise than the monster film genre, the zombie flick (a perennial CultStud fave) is cinematic Silly Putty: cheap, gross fun, with a knack for picking up the day's newsprint and stretching it across the warp of what looks a lot like dead flesh. For a brief passage of time, it seems like *28 Weeks Later* (Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 2007) will be the best war movie ever. This despite the fact that it's barely distinct from

predecessor *28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle, 2002), origin of the fast zombie trend.

The current iteration starts in London several months after the "rage virus" has emptied the streets of the City (a certain kind of Londoner's fantasy, that). Shock-numbed civilians are escorted back into the beachhead of civilization under heavy manners, courtesy the U.S. Army. This quarantined lockdown area is called . . . the "Green Zone."

The only thing to do with such a blatant set-up is push the logic to breaking; for a dozen minutes the movie gives it a go. The panoptic views of the Green Zone apartment towers are shot entirely through sniper scopes. While military shepherds peep their flock, we hear their transistorized communications crackle: soldiers' mordant play-by-play, soundtrack of security detail. It seems possible that the audio comes from field recordings of the Baghdad Green Zone, with a series of shots improvised around it—sort of like *What's Up, Tiger Lily?* (Woody Allen, 1966) in the mirror. One suspects this is the greatest idea ever; for a moment, anything is possible. Then a family romance breaks out and everything gets a good deal less ambitious. At least it ends with a Channel crossing toward the land that gave us The Terror in the first place, leaving us to wait for *28 Months Later*, in which zombie Robespierre and zombie Saint-Just race toward a zombie Thermidor.

History, in its lumbering way, can still outpace Hollywood. The original trailer for *The Kingdom* (Peter Berg, 2007) played late last year, promising the purest propaganda film of the era. An American base in Saudi Arabia has been suicide-bombed by a terrorist mastermind. Voice of liberal reason: "You have to let the tools of diplomacy work." Cue Jennifer Garner, no-nonsense forensics expert: "If we can't get there *now*, we will not find the man responsible for this crime."

Perhaps, the trailer proposed, the Bush/Blair rationale of Gulf War 2, always fantastical, might be more persuasive in fictional form. Iraq is played by Saudi Arabia; Osama by "Abu Hamza, the guy who teaches these guys how to kill!"; in the role of the U.S. military, the FBI's "Evidence Response Team." In we go, in high dudgeon.

But something curious happened. After an advance screening or two, the film vanished; trailers too. Life went on. The test numbers for the real war surged downward to darkness.

In June, Universal floated an autumn release date—and a new trailer. It recuts much of the same material with some new stuff, newly dark and ominous, now scored to U2's "Bullet the Blue Sky." "Allow us to help your men catch this criminal," pleads team leader Jamie Foxx. "We shouldn't be here. We *shouldn't* be here!" professes their host. Cut to patrician politico: "The end comes no matter what. The only thing that matters is, how do you wanna go out?" A movie about why we had to go in becomes a movie about how we should comport ourselves while there, with hints of exit strategy and a militant-pacifist soundtrack—the film seemingly edited from pro- to antiwar, without ever being released. The circuit of culture grows shorter than ever; the intermediate phase, where Cultural Studies labors to suture the film to the history around it, has been rendered obsolete.

***Children of Men*: the bloodspattered lens.**

© 2006 Universal Studios. DVD: Universal Studios (U.S.)

What is there to see, then? Formalism, one supposes—remembering that form itself is no more able to stand apart from history than the eye can stand apart from what it regards. *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006) has an annoying plot, with dud intriguing and an empty messianism. But its look, its way of looking, repay such annoyances and then some: the gray and permanent state of emergency; the acts of terror demoted to the background, quotidian and near-banal; the sensation of quarantine that extends, unnamed, in all directions.

The war of all against all has perhaps never been better filmed than in the prolonged escape through the warrens and streets of Bexhill camp, redolent of Guantanamo and Long Kesh, of Abu Ghraib reenactments. There's no order because there's no *cause*, just as there's no cause offered for the biological crisis; it's all simply become a way-things-are, some endgame of imperial decline. The camera, red smear on lens, shifting subtly between over-the-shoulder and POV, doesn't know where to look. Everyone's shooting at everyone. It moved me, to paraphrase the poet Robert Creeley about Bresson, that life was after all like that. You are in war. You race through the town, with blood on your eye, burdened. The story is true.

JOSHUA CLOVER is the author of *The Matrix* (BFI Modern Classics, 2004).

THE FUTURE OF IMAGE CAPTURE

Digital cinematography is nothing new. From the mini-DV *Inland Empire* to the high-definition (HD) *Apocalypto* (both 2006), many films are now being shot to tape. But for *Zodiac* (2007), director David Fincher selected the Thomson Viper, an HD camera that records to drives instead of film or tape. Like a film magazine, the drive is ejected when full and the files are downloaded onto a master hard drive from which they will later be imported into an editing platform. While other directors have used the Viper for parts of films, notably Michael Mann for *Collateral* (2004) and *Miami Vice* (2006), Fincher is the first Hollywood director to capture an entire feature film solely as data. Except for a few specialty shots, *Zodiac* never existed on film or videotape.

With new technology come new problems. A number of dead pixels and digital artifacts embedded in the source material had to be painstakingly removed in post-production. Horizontal lines also appeared on the uncompressed data during the shooting of a scene near overhead power lines. (Instead of checking for hairs in the film gate after each take, camera assistants of the future may constantly

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David Fincher directs a scene in *Zodiac.* Photo: Merrick Morton. © Paramount Pictures

Michael Mann shooting *Miami Vice* with a Viper.

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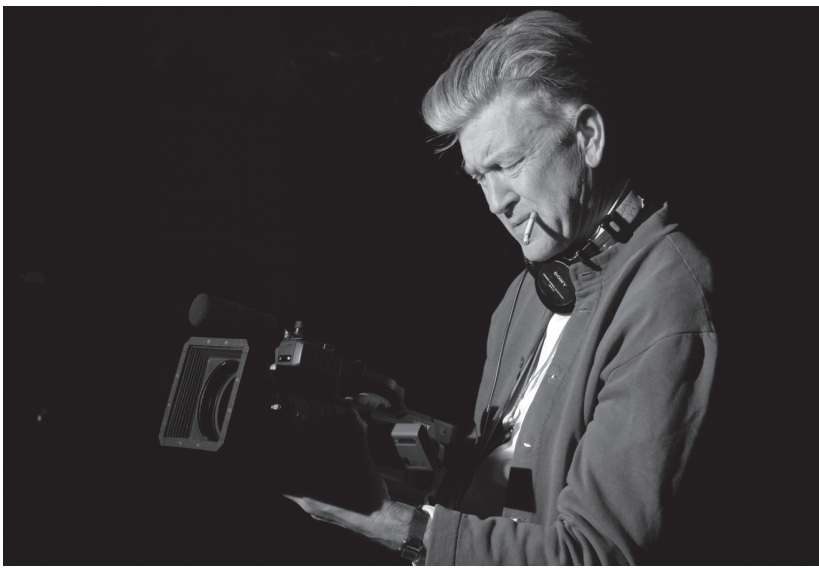

David Lynch with a mini-DV camera used for *Inland Empire*.

© 2006 Inland Empire Productions Inc.

scan for electrical interference.) And the great fear of the past, that light would reach the original camera negative, has been replaced by a new fear of accidental footage deletion. Since only so many drives are yet available these must be erased and reused for further shooting. But because digital cameras produce no original negative, only multiple backups can prevent a mistake.

The Viper is one of several professional HD cameras that record to drives. The ARRI D-20 more closely resembles a film camera with its traditional prime lenses, optical viewfinder, and sensor that recreates 35mm depth of field (amount of usable focus). The Red, the first camera from Oakley sunglasses founder Jim Jannard, was displayed at the April 2007 National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas. Though the Red boasts a low price tag and small size, weighing in at only nine pounds, few cinematographers have yet tested the camera. (Peter Jackson used the Red to make the short World War I film *Crossing the Line*, clips of which are on the Internet.)

Whether recording to drive or tape, HD cameras have certain advantages over film cameras. For example, the shutter angle can be opened wider than 180 degrees, allowing for motion blur effects and greater exposure at lower light levels. Another big advantage is longer recording time. A 35mm film magazine lasts only eleven minutes. A drive currently lasts closer to fifteen minutes, and tape usually runs upward of thirty. But so far digital cinematography is neither faster for directors of photography (DPs) nor less expensive for producers. A DP must still wait for "film dailies" to see the image processed through look-up tables (color presets), as an uncompressed digital signal produces an unattractive flat, greenish image. The approximate look is created on set by a digital imaging technician (DIT) with a waveform monitor and processing equipment, a much greater cost than the traditional camera loader. The post-production chain remains time-consuming and expensive, for since digital editing platforms cannot accommodate huge uncompressed files, these must be imported at a lower resolution just like film. In addition, both film and digital projects generally opt for a digital intermediate (DI) to color-time the image.

Directors such as Steven Spielberg will likely continue to shoot on film for as long as it is manufactured. But the fact is a 4K digital image now has roughly the same resolution as a 35mm image. There remains the aesthetic debate over creating an image chemically or electronically, but no one denies that video is now a serious rival to film. As HD cameras pass from tape into the purely digital realm, we are inching closer to a long-promised visual threshold, one in which video not only matches the visual standards of film but exceeds them. In hindsight it is remarkable that basic camera technology remained essentially constant for the first hundred years of our industry, for in another ten years, with cinemas now being equipped with digital projection, the image you see on screen may always have existed as a purely electronic signal.

GREG MARCKS is the director of *11:14,* available on DVD from New Line Home Video.

THE NAMESAKE

DEEPIKA BAHRI IS TOUCHED BY MIRA NAIR'S VIVID, SONOROUS ACCOUNT OF IMMIGRANT LIFE IN AN ADOPTED HOME CITY

An extraordinary tale of an ordinary Bengali immigrant family in America, Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2006) is based on Pulitzer-prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri's 2003 novel of the same name. In the wake of highly successful films about immigrant life and culture clash (such as the 2002 blockbuster *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*), this is an unremarkable subject these days, but one rendered poignant by Nair's capacity to imbue its clichéd staples with the depth and ambiguity they deserve but rarely command. Considered together with *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and *Mississippi Masala* (1991), Nair's latest film is part, one might argue, of a soberly meditative trilogy on the tussle between the noise and music of globalization, and the losses and gains of migration.

Aptly, this tale of cultures set on a collision course begins with a train wreck. Ashoke Ganguli (Irrfan Khan), a young Bengali man with a fondness for the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, is among the survivors. Years later in New York, he nicknames his infant son "Gogol" as a stopgap until he and his wife Ashima (Tabu) can get word about a more suitably Indian "good name" for the child from her mother (Tanushree Shankar). The letter from Kolkata never arrives. Gogol (Kal Penn) retains his moniker, despite an abortive attempt by his parents to change his name to "Nikhil," until a crisis of identity at his high school graduation propels him to select the name he had rejected as a toddler (Soham Chatterjee). Experimenting with possible identities, he is "Nick" to his white American girlfriend Maxine (Jacinda Barrett) before he falls for Moushumi (Zuleikha Robinson), a Bengali American with whom he shares the history of his two names. Gogol's struggle with his identity and dual heritage, and that of his parents as they shuttle between two cultures and two monumental cities—New York and Kolkata, make for a powerful story about the desire to belong that characterizes the lives of so many immigrants who have left a familiar home for a new one.

This sort of story is almost too palpably resonant for a South Asian immigrant like me. I grew up, moreover, in Kolkata, the city that Ashima and Ashoke never quite leave behind; I even learned classical dance with Tanushree Shankar. Though I had read the novel already, it was clear to me that the film would be even more personally evocative because it could reenact a drama the book could only describe. The story's central theme of mourning—for the loss of loved ones, for a home, a way of life, connection to parents or children, or even one's own self over time, make the film particularly difficult to watch when the language and cultural register are all too familiar. Difficult because I remembered my own phone call in the middle of the night telling me that my father had passed away in Kolkata as I watched Ashoke receive the news of his father-in-law's death while Ashima slept unaware. My father's ashes too were flowing in the Ganges but I never had a chance to go back and submerge them there myself, as Ashima, Gogol, and his sister Sonia (Sahira Nair) do. When I saw Maxine arrive in black at the Ganguli household for Ashoke's wake where everyone else was wearing white, I remembered that when I went in to teach the morning my father had passed away, I had nothing white to wear so I wore black then and for a month, mourning in the color of another culture, but mourning nonetheless.

The Namesake, however, is in the end no more my story than that of other, non-South Asian immigrants in the audience, who will recognize different things in the film. Love and loss and our push-and-pull relationships with parents are both universal and clichéd, or both clichéd and therefore universal. Yet, while these may be common themes, the story is always on the scale of one. It is not the universal themes, but the details that count: the colors, the sounds, the music, and the language. That is the story worth telling. It is on an intimate scale that *The Namesake* scores its mark. The film makes especially effective use of colors and color palettes to

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Gogol is born to
Ashima and Ashoke.

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construct a visual architecture not only of the physical spaces of Kolkata and New York but also of the emotional spaces inhabited by the characters. Ashoke's wake, for instance, brings home to Gogol the black-and-white difference between his world and Maxine's. One notes too the red color in Ashima's parting and at her forehead which she smudges when she learns that Ashoke has died, the smudging a potent sign of the loss of a mate and of the color of life in Hindu custom. Earlier, even before Ashoke tells Ashima that her father has died, we would know it from her mother's white sari and her brother's shaved head. Equally subtle but telling, autumn colors immediately signal the shift to America because, as colorful as Indian landscapes can be, they cannot produce the colors of an autumn tree in New York.

Moreover, the visual palette of the film and the tale of two cities has been inspired by photographs and paintings by well-known masters of the visual register. The strong colors of New York suburbia recall Mark Rothko's compositions while Kolkata's visual grid is mapped upon Dayanita Singh's black-and-white photographs of the city. Photographs by Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mitch Epstein, Derry Moore, Raghu Rai, and Raghubir Singh are inspirational sources not only for visual representations of different locations but also for grasping the essential quality of some of the characters. In Derry Moore's portrait of the young princess of Burdwan standing in her wrought-iron balcony, for instance, Nair saw some of the longing and stillness of Ashima. The film does not seek to reproduce paintings or photographs so much as find in them a quality of color or light that becomes the source for visualizing people and places. Production designer Stephanie Carroll collaborated with Nair to uncover the emotional qualities of color and shape in several scenes, perhaps most memorably in the red-and-white schematic of the Taj Mahal glimpsed behind the red sandstone gate, a pictorially nuanced revelation to Gogol and Sonia of their complex inheritance. Gogol's choice of architecture as a major at Yale at this moment is telling for we already know that it is important that he learn how to build a home, an identity, a bridge, and a life that can span his dual worlds. As meaningful as this dawning of purpose is, we also sense that it will be some time before he will have learned how to do so. Our names and our birthplaces are given to us. What remains to be done over a lifetime is what we make of the world and ourselves. It is this powerful theme, particularly significant for the immigrant far away from his or her birthplace, which is captured deftly by the story's emphasis on the architectural settings of our lives, the places where we live.

The film does not simply suggest that languages mark difference but perhaps more profoundly that language is a trap, an escape, and a refuge all at once. Paradoxically, the translation can be more faithful to our experience than the original.

Apart from its visual richness, the film uses sound and speech in order to address major issues of language and communication that lie at the heart of the film. As the film began and the title and credits appeared in Bengali, I felt a shock of recognition, thinking that this is not a script that would be intelligible to most of the audience but that it would also be opaque to non-Bengali speakers in India. I started to think then about layers and levels of belonging beyond country and culture, of belonging more intimately to a city, to a neighborhood, to a language, to ways of loving and mourning that go so far beyond the generic fact of being from India, or Indian in America.

The book from which the film is adapted is in English of course, with no room for a Bengali script. If much is lost in the translation to an adaptation, much more can also be found in the hands of a good filmmaker. It is one thing, for instance, for us to read in the novel that Ashima, "instead of saying Ashoke's name . . . utters the interrogative . . . 'Are you listening to me?'" and quite another for the film to force us to hear a language other than English both through its sound and its visual clue in the subtitle that appears on the screen. The use of Bengali to mark moments of intimacy, difference, and comfort is necessarily absent from the book. One notices in the film that, as time goes by, Ashoke and Ashima speak more and more in English, but their last phone exchange just before he suddenly dies in Cleveland (the city's name interestingly evokes separations and cleavage) is, poignantly, in Bengali. When Gogol returns from Cleveland with his head shaved (as his father had ritually shaved his, scaring Gogol as a child, when his grandfather passed away) he unexpectedy chooses Bengali as the language in which to tell his mother he wanted to do this when she tells him there was no need for it. Kal Penn's somewhat unconvincing Bengali accent notwithstanding (arguably justifiable since he has grown up in America), the sound of another language on his tongue alerts us to a shift in his relationship to his mother and his culture even if we did not understand the meaning of the words without the subtitle. It is the difference of sound that teaches us that words can mean what they do in multiple ways. On another level, the relation between sound and sense is explored in the barbershop scene. Gogol undergoes a ritual of mourning and conformity to tradition while others

Ashima on her wedding day. Photo: Abbot Genser. © 2007 TCFFC

are shaving their heads as a fashion statement of rebellion to the sound of rap music.

Once the film has attuned us to the difference of languages and contexts, we also observe that the Bengali name *Ganguli* must be spelled out by Ashima and translated on the phone to the intern at the Cleveland hospital ("G like green" . . . "N like napkin," etc.) in English words and unfamiliar names for known things. By this time, Ashoke Ganguli has already passed away, existing now but as a name and a story to tell in the linguistic resources available to us. We also learn that English and Bengali are not the only choices available to Indian immigrants from Bengal. Moushumi's difference from Gogol is marked through her use of French. Moushumi's cell phone ringtone rings to announce "Bonjour Madame," and perhaps it is ironic that her betrayal of Gogol (and their shared languages of communication, English and Bengali) is communicated to us through her exchange with her lover Pierre in French in her mother-in-law's kitchen as they fry samosas for a party (Bengalis would use the word "shingara" for "samosa," some viewers in India have objected!). It is not enough, she tells Gogol later, that they are both Bengali. Of course she tells him this in English. Even so, the film does not simply suggest that languages mark difference but perhaps more profoundly that language is a trap, an escape, and a refuge all at once. Paradoxically, the translation can be more faithful to our experience than the original. Translations never fail to remind us that language is at once bridge and barrier, both means of communication and its loss.

The film's score and music, furthermore, nuance its thematic of the symphony and discord of globalization. Music is clearly of great significance in the film, marking moods, differences, and the melting into sound of rival cultures. Many languages, genres, and styles of music evoke a sort of modern-day Babel in New York, communicating the theme of worlds and cultures and generations in collision and contact. On his high school graduation day, for instance, Gogol can barely hear what his father is saying over the Pearl Jam song that is blaring in his room. The song is called "Once," with "once upon a time" as its refrain. The story Ashoke wants to tell him is about his train wreck and survival (also once upon a time) but its burden is no match for the sounds that have already filled his son's head. It is not until many years later that

Gogol can make room for the story left untold by his father that day.

Shifts in music also mark movements in relationships. When the scene transitions, for instance, from the honeymoon suite where Moushumi dances seductively for Gogol to a pop version of an old Hindi song, "Ye mera divanapan hai," about inevitable desire and obsession, the film requires us to see *and hear* the shift. The next scene takes us to the apartment of Moushumi's friends Astrid and Donald. Here the background music features Verdi's aria, "La donna e mobile," which of course means the lady is fickle (something Gogol will have to understand later). But if Moushumi is fickle, feckless, and unreliable, she is also mobile in the sense of being the wandering migrant who is compelled to keep moving. She has already transited through London, New York, and Paris—cities we think of as magnets for migrants who have been set in motion by modernity. We wonder if she will ever stop to find a home or learn to be faithful to herself or anyone else. As an alternative to customary representations of Indian womanhood, Moushumi joins Aditi (Vasundhara Das) and the sexy Ayesha (Neha Dubey) in *Monsoon Wedding* and Meena (Sarita Choudhury) in *Mississippi Masala* to offer a complex character whose coordinates have been mapped by the trademark epiphenomena of modernity: migration and/or globalization. No longer content to fulfill dutifully their roles as custodians of tradition, these women might all be said to betray a fragile social structure with their promiscuity, but they also demand a reckoning with the diversity of experiences and choices available to them. The two pieces of music in two different languages in the juxtaposed scenes

Top: the Gangulis in India. Bottom: Gogol with Maxine (left) and Moushumi. Photos: Abbot Genser, Mira Nair. © 2007 TCFFC

Mira Nair with Tabu. Photo: Abbot Genser. © 2007 TCFFC

are background scores that foreground Moushumi's conflicting desires and allegiances. The beautiful sounds that are set next to each other, but are so differently beautiful, express strong emotions and perceptions, and ask us to respond to sound and sensation even in a foreign language while noting the inevitable loss of comprehension in each experience.

Ashima's return to her interrupted training in classical Indian music as she "follows her bliss" is part of the symphonic structure of a film that tries to represent the experience of a multicultural world through the use of contrapuntal notes, different melodies, and rhythmic structures. The Ashima of Jhumpa Lahiri's novel is not a singer and she is given no music or space of bliss to return to. Mira Nair's own love of music in general and Indian music in particular inspired this move from the novel, allowing her to use music as a way of asking, I believe, that we listen and reach beyond language even when, maybe especially when, we cannot understand what we are hearing.

The use of music is one of the most inspired additions to the film version of the novel. Another is Nair's decision to shift the American location from Boston to New York. Nair says she wanted to capture the commonality of two great cities. The film achieves this beautifully through the visual impact of its two great bridges, the Howrah Bridge in Kolkata, the busiest cantilever bridge in the world, and the 59th Street Bridge in Manhattan. Journeys and bridges are not only visual cues about one place telescoped onto another but obvious themes in the story that remind us that bridges are places to go over, not to rest or to build a house upon. And of course, that when you come to a bridge you must cross it or you will never know what is on the other side.

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ABSTRACT In this review of Mira Nair's film adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's 2003 novel about an immigrant Indian family in New York, particular close attention is paid to the director's careful use of color, speech, and music to evoke with subtlety and power the experience of migration and its attendant mourning.

KEYWORDS Mira Nair, Indian diaspora, migration, globalization, sound in cinema

FILM CREDITS *The Namesake*. Director, producer: Mira Nair. Producer: Lydia Dean Pilcher. Screenplay: Sooni Taraporevala (based on the novel by Jhumpa Lahiri). Director of photography: Frederick Elmes. Editor: Allyson C. Johnson. Music: Nitin Sawhney. © 2006 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. U.S. distribution: Fox Searchlight Pictures.

DAYS OF GLORY
FLANDERS

EMMA WILSON ON TWO PRIZE-WINNING, POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS FRENCH WAR FILMS

Accepting the Grand Prix at Cannes 2006 for *Flanders*, Bruno Dumont said that it was an honor for all French cinema. He added: "French cinema is also *Days of Glory*." At the same festival, Rachid Bouchareb's film, to which Dumont referred, was awarded the prize for best actor, shared between its ensemble cast. Dumont was in part acknowledging a personal association. In tandem with his career as director, Bouchareb has acted as producer on Dumont's four feature films to date: *The Life of Jesus* (1997), *Humanity* (1999), *Twentynine Palms* (2003), and *Flanders*. At Cannes, in a festival where Ken Loach's historical drama, *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, took the Palme d'or, there was interesting synchronicity in the appearance in competition of two further films taking war and atrocity as their subject.

BRUNO DUMONT'S UNREAL WAR

Flanders is eccentric as a contemporary war film in depicting an imaginary conflict. Set initially, like *The Life of Jesus* and *Humanity* before it, in or near Bailleul in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region in France, the film gathers a handful of protagonists living in a farming community. The threat of the international conflict in which the young men will become involved, and in which all but one will lose their lives, predates the start of the film. The lead character, André Demester (Samuel Boidin), is asked early on whether he has received his letter and when he is leaving. Demester's destination, the location of the war, is not named through the film. It is suggested that he may not even know where he is going. The battle scenes inserted into the narrative were filmed in Tunisia, but the territory is shown as generic rather than geographically or nationally specific. Dumont has said of the landscapes in all his films that they represent "the character's interior climate." Although his dominant choice of subject matter, the urban and rural poor of contemporary France, has aligned him with the brothers Dardenne (Erick Zonca or Sandrine Veysset might also come to mind), Dumont insists that he does not make "social films" or film landscapes like a documentary-maker. (The Dardenne brothers might say the same.) Instead, he aims to screen or channel an emotional and subjective perception of the material world. And so the desert landscapes of *Flanders*'s war zones are the setting for a conflict shown as if mentally recorded by its participants, de-realized and elliptical. The film shows the war in snatches, with scenes of imprinted horror: the shooting of two child snipers in a derelict building, the gang rape of a woman army officer, the castration of a soldier.

Leaving its enemy territory uncharted, its war unlocated historically or politically, *Flanders* refuses any surveillant gaze or explanatory motive. Critic Jonathan Romney, writing in the 2006 London Film Festival brochure, speaks of the film's "gestures at Iraq and North Africa" and it is this mere gesturing, precisely, that grips the viewer. Dumont makes no claim to show what is happening or has happened in these territories; instead he discloses images of ungovernable and senseless brutality, and also of vulnerability, which may be said to attempt to distil some essence of war. Writing about Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1998) in *Forms of Being: Cinema, Aesthetics, Subjectivity*, Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit write: "the killing, amply and brilliantly filmed, is, without qualification, presented as a massive manifestation of human evil, and the only question asked about it is how it got into the world. Any historical answer to the question is simply ignored, implicitly dismissed before it might even be attempted." Referring to the much-exploited homology in French between *histoire* (story) and *Histoire* (History), Dumont has claimed that stories are more important than History to filmmakers, because the story works to draw in the viewer. While Dumont, like Malick in Bersani and Dutoit's reading, provocatively ignores historical fact, he nevertheless differs from Malick in also moving away from metaphysical questions about human evil. There is a leveling

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Bruno Dumont directs Samuel Boidin and Adelaïde Leroux in *Flanders*. Photo: Roger Arpajou. © 3B Productions

in Dumont's filmmaking that comes in his bid to draw the viewer directly into the film's orbit. Story may be the device he names, but sensation, visceral feeling, are equally crucial to his films' effects.

For Romney, Dumont shows "a bestial humanity"; for Stephen Holden, *New York Times* critic, Dumont's characters "mate like beasts." The implicit allusion to Zola, to the "human beast," is apt (Dumont himself is less concerned with morality, speaking instead of Cézanne, claiming his films as pictorial first and foremost, present without meaning). Talk of animality, however, risks setting Dumont's characters apart from the broader sweep of humanity. *Flanders*, rightly, refuses such distancing. It marks a subtle shift in Dumont's work in making its female protagonist, Barbe (Adelaïde Leroux), the main conduit of the story. Barbe, in her sexual and bodily presence, initially recalls other women in Dumont's films, Freddy's girlfriend Marie (Marjorie Cottreel) in *The Life of Jesus*, Domino (Séverine Caneele) in *Humanity*. Like them, she has a body fiercely on show, emphasized by very short skirts. When she has sex with Demester in the winter fields, she has just to claw down woolly tights to let him enter her. One of Dumont's favored motifs is the image of nudity in an open landscape. In *Twentynine Palms* (2003), especially, the characters seem like Adam and Eve in a desert Eden. Yet, in the less abstract moments of his films, sex is not strictly differentiated from other modes of bodily experience. In a striking sequence in *The Life of Jesus*, Freddy (David Douche) has sex with Marie in his bedroom in his mother's house. As Marie is washing herself afterwards, and he still lies in bed, he has an epileptic seizure. His mother (Geneviève Cottreel) rushes upstairs to hold him. The proximity of the small rooms in the house, the mother's position beside the newly shaking body of her son, set in disturbing alignment sorts of physical attention and experience that are conventionally kept apart.

Commenting that "there is no foreplay, no eye-contact" in *Flanders*, Stephen Holden refers to "Dumont's elemental view of human sexuality." Yet in the first sex scene, the camera's attention to Barbe's pale face, to the leafless trees and cold sky we view from her perspective as she sits up post coitum, underline her disaffected use of her body, emphasizing her role as a conduit. Demester and Blondel (Henri Cretel), another conscript to whom Barbe has become romantically attached, leave her behind as they depart for war. The film's two locations are starkly different. But the wager of the film, one in which it is largely successful, is in the connection forged between the separate sequences, through the figure of Barbe.

On one level, that connection comes in the film's romantic narrative. Where Barbe has transferred her affection from Demester to Blondel, the men on foreign territory still feel their rivalry in love, as demonstrated in Demester's abandonment of a wounded Blondel late in the war scenes. The underscoring of his motivation seems one of the film's weakest points. Where it excels, by contrast, is in the subtler

Barbe is a conduit for events and emotions in *Flanders*. © 2005 3B Productions, Arte France Cinéma, Le Fresnoy. DVD: Aventi (France)

reckoning with Barbe's intimations of war while she is still at home. After the sequence where the child snipers are shot, the film cuts to Barbe checking for blood between her legs. She has changed, becoming more melancholy and disturbed. The sense that Barbe is altered, her image somehow tarnished, is further compounded in the next return to Bailleul, after the gory castration of one of the men in Demester's company. From the pallor and blood of his Christ-like figure, the film cuts to Barbe in bed. She is hospitalized, like a modern-day hysteric; perhaps this is a somatized reaction to the atrocity of war. Her anger, the contortions of her body, her brutality as she fights a psychiatric nurse, are all a pale reflection of the experiences elsewhere which she fears or surmises. When Demester is back in France, Barbe has apparently returned to sanity and they roam together in the landscapes around the farm. Barbe's anger flares again here, however, as she confronts Demester with knowledge of the horrors in which he has been involved elsewhere. "I was there," she says. "I know everything. I know what you did." Her uncanny words raise the possibility that all we have seen of the war in the film have been Barbe's paranoid imaginings. This sense that the war scenes may only have been a projection of her consciousness seems compelling. Yet the film abandons such a reading as Demester concurs with her visions and acknowledges his guilt over Blondel.

Dumont has spoken about the tragedy of his films: "Love is uniting but we cannot unite. There is something tragic in sex that reveals our immense solitude." Despite its explicitness, much of his filmmaking seems to assert an incompatibility between the sexes. Yet the twist of *Flanders* is to set

excessive knowledge—Barbe's unsettling awareness of violence elsewhere—against this apparent gap in understanding. As they lie together at the film's close, the image mirroring the early imperfect coupling, Demester weeps and Barbe, with her hand on his neck, comforts him. As in *The Life of Jesus*, the film has moved from sexual contact to an image of nurture. There is a radiance at the end of the film, as also at the end of *The Life of Jesus* where Freddy escapes into the grasses. But *Flanders* never seems quite to aspire to the Bressonian spirituality of Dumont's first films. The film comes closer, perhaps, to the leveling with morality of Alain Resnais or Louis Malle. Indeed the end of *Flanders* recalls Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* (1974), one of Dumont's favorite films. Like Malle, he leaves us with levity, with a strange tenderness temporarily assuaging questions of guilt or moral responsibility.

Flanders is a short film, running to barely ninety minutes, yet there are still stretches of time where little happens and little is said. Paring the film down so strictly, eliding so much, Dumont takes us quickly into the thick of things. Immersing us, he gives the illusion that we have witnessed more than has been shown. Unanchored scenes of war, intimated from afar, yet familiar on home territory, offer glimpses of a barbaric reality too frequently unseen.

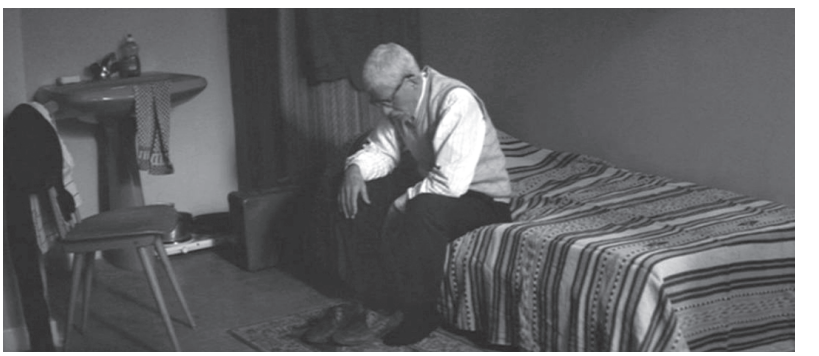
Where* Flanders, *and for that matter* Saving Private Ryan, *offer a visceral war aesthetic—of blood, damaged flesh, wounding, open entrails—*Days of Glory *is a film of dust and skin. The first battle scene, in Italy, fills the air with particles of earth and sand.

RACHID BOUCHAREB'S HISTORICAL WAR

When I first saw *Flanders* at the London Film Festival, I was immediately gripped by its attention to the excesses of war, to acts and events beyond the range of usual human experience. I felt that the combination of sensationalism and arthouse austerity, peculiar to Dumont, allowed the film to confront war and its affect in a duly brutal and arresting manner. I remain convinced of this a year on. My experience of *Days of Glory* has been different. At first I was unconvinced by its populist narrative approach; but, on further viewing, it has gained my interest.

Very different issues of visibility and knowledge pertain to *Days of Glory*. In a DVD interview accompanying her feature film *Inch'Allah Dimanche* (2001), Yamina Benguigui speaks of the Algerian women who joined immigrant husbands in France in the 1970s as "these invisible heroines." Bouchareb has made a film about invisible heroes, those soldiers from the Maghreb and West Africa who joined the French army in the latter stages of World War II, to liberate "la mère-patrie." On the film's release, the engagement it depicts was described in *Le Monde* as "a forgotten page" in French history. Where the film has been compared to *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), such a comparison overlooks the work of excavation achieved here. Bouchareb's previous *Little Senegal* (2001) opens in a museum, the "Maison des esclaves," in Goree Island, off the coast of Senegal. *Little Senegal* is impelled by a will to track a history of colonial trauma and bodily horror, through the navigation of its sites and spaces. *Days of Glory* equally seeks to recuperate forgotten events, and its pathos and impact are the greater for that.

Another polemical documentary by Benguigui, *Mémoires d'immigrés: l'héritage maghrébin* (1997) uses testimonial interviews and archive footage to render the experience of Maghrebi immigrants in France, including those who fought in World War II. Bouchareb might have used such strategies to present the history recounted in *Days of Glory*. He chooses an epic mode instead. The film opens with a collage of documentary images, family snapshots thread its narrative, but mostly Bouchareb foregoes such small details in favor of a broad brush and a widescreen canvas. The film is cut through with panoramic images of the different (named) territories—Italy, Provence, the Vosges, Alsace—where the soldiers fight. The expanse of these shots, caught from the air, indicates the omniscience the film seeks. Scale and grandeur are at the forefront in these tableaux, and in diegetic images of light-threaded forests, of snow-covered mountains, which conjure the impersonality and massive objectivity of Ansel Adams's photography. In these landscapes, Bouchareb may find traces of invisible heroes, yet the actors he chooses to animate his drama are far from the unknowns of Dumont's cast. The intensely popular actor and comedian, Jamel Debbouze, also co-producer of the film, takes top billing as Saïd, a role recalling the appeal of his characters in *Amélie* (2001) and *Angel-A* (2005). *Days of Glory* opens with Saïd's departure from his mother in Algeria, allowing the ensuing military drama to map his coming of age. Equally absorbing is the story of Messaoud (Roschdy Zem), whose affair with a woman in Marseille, and attempts to rejoin her, give the film its one romantic strand. Dominating and surviving beyond these stories is that of Abdelkader (Sami Bouajila), who embodies the film's political consciousness. (Bouajila previously played the gorgeous Felix in Ducastel and Martineau's queer road movie *Adventures of Felix* [2000].) Bouajila brings gravity to *Days of Glory*; alive to the racism inherent in the



Days of Glory, clockwise from top left: archival titles, Saïd with his mother, the final battle, Abdelkader in the present, Abdelkader survives, Yassir on parade. © 2006 Tessalit Productions, Kissfilms Productions, France 2 Cinéma, France 3 Cinéma, StudioCanal, Scope Invest/Versus Production. DVD: TF1 Vidéo (France)

structures of the French army at the time, forthright in his bid to prove his honor and defend the men with whom he fights, Abdelkader is our guide through the film.

Days of Glory, much more so in fact than *Mémoires d immigrés*, is a didactic film. It leads its cast through scenarios that show very clearly the idealism and treachery that subtend this forgotten history. In Algeria at the beginning, we see gathered ranks singing the colonial army hymn, "C'est nous les Africains," the camera lingering on the mouths of the soldiers. The film cuts to an image of the French flag. In a series of scenes, frequently focused through Abdelkader in conflict with French and *pied noir* senior officers, attention is drawn to inequalities in opportunity in the army, to individual and institutional racism. *Days of Glory* is deft in pointing to hypocrisy and exploitation, without ever quite dissipating the dream of heroism in liberating France that impels its characters. Despite its ironies, this dream allows the film to accede to a tragic vision.

Where *Flanders*, and for that matter *Saving Private Ryan*, offer a visceral war aesthetic—of blood, damaged flesh, wounding, open entrails—*Days of Glory* is a film of dust and skin. The first battle scene, in Italy, fills the air with particles of earth and sand. Conjuring this different, tactile reality of war, and so its confusion, Bouchareb also touches on meanings of territory and land. While Saïd has been inspired to "wash the French flag with his blood," his ideal of sacrificial cleansing is lost. The skin of Bouchareb's actors is at times caked in the dirt of the territories they liberate.

The film's power escalates as it continues: Bouchareb's virtuosity as choreographer of war is witnessed most acutely in the closing sequences of the film, in a protracted battle in Alsace. The men have reached a village; as Saïd comments, they could almost be at peace. But the fragile harmony is shot to bits. The initial moments of battle frame the soldiers prowess, the *tirailleurs* picking off each resurgent fighter. The film so successfully ties the viewer to the subjectivity and body-consciousness of the soldiers that we seem to navigate the scene directly with them. Yet, as the battle shifts gear, the men's actions are rendered impotent, faced with firearms which blast through the bricks and mortar of the village. As each African soldier dies, incinerated, bathed in soot and dust, the film offers a lament in Arabic in its musical score.

On a first viewing, as the film ruthlessly sacrifices protagonists one by one, there comes a moment when it seems that Bouchareb will wipe out the cast entirely. The subsequent silencing of their histories might justify this move. But such an act of erasure would have run counter to the genre conventions that the film still upholds. So Abdelkader alone survives, allowing him to carry the film forward into our present. Bouchareb still reflects on erasure, as Abdelkader's bravery in Alsace is ignored. Neither he, nor the dead Saïd, will have a new future in the army. Joining forces with another battalion Abdelkader continues as corporal. His survival does little to contradict the historical erasure his death would ensure.

In the last scenes, in a gesture familiar from Spielberg, an aged Abdelkader visits a war cemetery in Alsace. The sentimentalism of the scene is undercut, however, as we also view the elderly man return to the *foyer* that is his home. These *foyers*, or hostels, built by Sonacotra (the National Company for the Construction of Housing for Algerian workers in France), date from the 1950s, and, still existing in France now, are inhabited by single men or those separated from their families. Benguigui, in *Mémoires d'immigrés*, takes us into similar rooms, lingering on the material details of these small domestic environments. As *Days of Glory* enters this last interior, it releases its most stringent and melancholy critique of the legacy of colonialism in contemporary France.

The confinement of Abdelkader's space, the tightly made single bed with its striped blanket, recall the last scenes of another film arguably about the endurance of the colonial heritage in France, Claire Denis's *Beau Travail* (1999). *Beau Travail* cuts from the room occupied by the disgraced Galoup (Denis Lavant) to an anarchic, probably posthumous disco scene to the beat of "The Rhythm of the Night." More soberly, *Days of Glory* cuts back to the Alsace cemetery where we read in superimposed text that pensions to African war veterans were frozen by France in the late 1950s. The film's significant historical achievement, rightly vaunted, has been in triggering Jacques Chirac in 2006 to bring the level of the pensions still paid to citizens of these nations in line with those paid to the French.

CINEMA AND POLITICS: THE EXAMPLE OF RESNAIS

In its first week on release in France in October 2006, *Days of Glory* boasted attendance figures of 834,805. By comparison, only 32,293 saw *Flanders* during its opening week the month before. The impact of *Days of Glory* has been proportionately more significant. Speaking about politics and film in a 1961 *Premier Plan* interview, Resnais commented that the first films about the concentration camps made immediately after the war did not reach a large public; it was his aim with *Night and Fog* (1955) to make a film capable of broader influence. What unites Bouchareb and Resnais here is a will to use the resources of cinema to touch the public. *Night and Fog* ends with a reminder that, by 1955, the Algerian war was beginning, with new risks of human rights atrocities committed by the French; *Days of Glory*, chewing over past events and their legacy, also makes a political comment, at its end taking us inside an incriminating space of present-day immigrant life in France.

Archive footage in *Mémoires d'immigrés*.

© 1997 Bandits. DVD: MK2 S.A.

Zouina, invisible heroine of *Inch'Allah Dimanche*.

© 2001 Bandits Long. DVD: Gaumont Columbia Tristar

From left: Rachid Bouchareb, Sami Bouajila, and Roschdy Zem on the set of *Days of Glory.*

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Resnais's *Providence* (1977) provides a point of reference for *Flanders*. By this stage in his filmmaking, Resnais had cut his work free from direct reference to history and politics. Yet, as critic Naomi Greene has argued in *Landscapes of Loss: The National Past in Postwar French Cinema*, shots in the oneiric world of *Providence*—barbed-wire camps, demolished buildings, a helicopter hovering—bear the imprint of "historical anguish." The refusal of referentiality, yet persistence of affect, bring Dumont and Resnais very close. In addition to alignment with social realism, Dumont has merited comparison, from Martine Beugnet and others, with more experimental strands in current French filmmaking, particularly the cinema of sensation and corporeality of Philippe Grandrieux. Dumont's particular achievement (like Resnais's before him) is in attaching such filmmaking of an affective or fantasmatic real to current and contingent situations (if not events). Dumont films the affect of war, its nightmare proximity with home, its involvement with the bodily sensations and minor fantasies of everyday life.

Dumont and Bouchareb join, as their ongoing collaboration indicates, in a political form of filmmaking. Countering certain trends in contemporary French cinema, which has recently favored Hollywood-style spectacles (as with *Tell No One* [2006] and *Molière* [2007]), Dumont and Bouchareb, in their different but complementary ways, reflect on class, race, and social injustice, jointly reminding us of the personal horror of armed conflict and of the lack of political agency of its participants past and future.

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ABSTRACT Though the two films seem rather different—Bruno Dumont's *Flanders* dealing with an imaginary contemporary war, Rachid Bouchareb's *Days of Glory* concerned with forgotten incidents in World War II—the argument of this essay is that they share a sense, somewhat unusual among recent French filmmakers, of the political power of cinema.

KEYWORDS war film, Rachid Bouchareb, Bruno Dumont, French cinema, film and history

CREDITS *Indigènes.* Director, screenplay: Rachid Bouchareb. Producer: Jean Bréhat. Screenplay: Olivier Lorelle. Director of photography: Patrick Blossier. Editor: Yannick Kergoat. Music: Armand Amar, Khaled. © 2006 Tessalit Productions, Kissfilms Productions, France 2 Cinéma, France 3 Cinéma, StudioCanal, Scope Invest/Versus Production. U.S. distribution: The Weinstein Company. DVD: TF1 Vidéo (France).

Flandres. Director, screenplay: Bruno Dumont. Producers: Jean Bréhat, Rachid Bouchareb. Director of photography: Yves Cape. Editor: Guy Lecorne. © 2005 3B Productions, Arte France Cinéma, Le Fresnoy. U.S. distribution: International Film Circuit. DVD: Aventi (France).

INTO GREAT SILENCE

WILLIAM JOHNSON ON PHILIP GRÖNING'S ABSORBING DOCUMENTARY OF MONASTIC LIFE IN A REMOTE CORNER OF THE ALPS

The order of monks (and nuns) known as the Carthusians trace their origin to Bruno of Cologne, who in the year 1084 set up a hermit's life with six companions in the French Alps. That settlement eventually became the monastery known as the Grande Chartreuse, and today the Carthusians have nineteen monasteries and six convents in various parts of the world. Carthusians neither proselytize nor seek out members, and they require a lengthy testing period before a postulant is accepted as a novice and later as a full monk. (Some monks devote part of their time to chores for the benefit of all, and are known as brothers.) Carthusians are also ecologically responsible and financially self-supporting.

Most people who have merely heard of the Carthusians (like myself, before seeing *Into Great Silence* and investigating further) believe that they never speak and that they allow no contact with the outside world. Both beliefs are false, though the latter is closer to the truth than the former. That is why the German filmmaker Philip Gröning had to wait sixteen years between formally asking to make a film of life in the Grand Chartreuse and receiving permission.

The filming of *Into Great Silence* took six months, and during that time Gröning lived in the monastery, following the monks' routine as closely as possible. He did all of the camera work and sound recording by himself. He used only whatever lighting was available in the monastery. To the finished film he added no incidental music, no archival footage, and no voiceover commentary.

So viewers have to interpret everything for themselves—which is all to the good. Since the film's only clues to the Carthusian life come from recorded images and sounds, any interested viewer is going to watch and listen with keen attention, even (or perhaps especially) during the scenes that reflect the apparent repetitiveness of Carthusian life. And since it's still not always easy to tell exactly what is happening or why, the film takes on some of the fascination of a mystery (in the nonreligious sense). Anyone willing to follow that mystery without expecting a pat denouement should have no trouble with the film's 162-minute running time. It certainly isn't necessary to have any kind of religious belief to appreciate the film. (Although I have an interest in the world's religions, I am not a believer of any.)

Since Carthusians do not normally speak inside the monastery, we can learn little about them by listening to what they say and how they say it. Some of them—such as the ringer of the chapel bell and the cook brother—appear enough times for us to become familiar with their looks, their facial expressions, and the way they move. But we can make only uncertain guesses about their backgrounds and education, and we have no idea of their former experiences and their reasons for choosing to become Carthusians. Such details about other Carthusians can be found in *An Infinity of Little Hours* by Nancy Klein Maguire, which follows five postulants who entered a Carthusian monastery in England, only one of them remaining as a lifelong monk. The book relates inner experiences that a film without questions and answers (Gröning's voice is never heard) cannot provide.

On the other hand, *Into Great Silence* offers close audiovisual contact with this isolated world and the daily life of the men who chose to stay here, enabling viewers to experience much of the physical environment, atmosphere, activities, and observances of the Carthusian way. The prominence of sounds other than speech, together with a wide range of light and color, intensifies the film's cumulative power.

Although this monastic life offers no such creature comforts as carpets, window curtains, cushions, and mattresses, most of the monastery's interior looks to the viewer as it probably does to the monks: more welcoming than spartan. One fortuitous result of using available light is that almost everything inside the monastery appears in warm tones, from browns and ochers to the ivories of the monks' white hab-

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A monk at work. © Philip Gröning/VG Bild Kunst/Zeitgeist Films Ltd.

its. During the midnight chapel observances, the lighting comes from the flickering red-tinged yellow of candles in small glasses, and on the scores of the Gregorian chants the red neumes (notes) stand out from the black. In one hall the monks sit on unpadded but finely carved wooden seats that form part of gleaming wall panels.

By contrast, the scenes taken just outside the monastery, filmed in a snowy winter and early spring, have a far cooler palette. So do the relatively few scenes taken in monks' individual cells (more like small apartments), which receive daylight through large windows. The monks spend much of their time alone in their cells, where they not only sleep but

also study, contemplate, and eat most of their meals. (They have communal meals only on Sundays and holy days. On other days a "delivery brother" places the meals in each cell's hatch.) The first scene inside a cell, however, is more shadowed and striking. It comes right at the beginning of the film and focuses for some time on a monk kneeling intensely at his prayer stool. Because this monk plays a key role in the monastery's daily schedule, that scene reverberates throughout the film.

The twenty-four-hour schedule of Carthusian monks is so demanding that their sleep time is divided into two three-hour periods, with prayers and Gregorian chanting in between. (The Carthusian website—www.chartreux.org—lists the full schedule under "The Carthusian Way of Life"/"A Carthusian Day.") During the rest of the day their time is mapped out with further religious services, study, and contemplation. Gröning lets us sense the regularity of that schedule by punctuating the film with four different series of scenes. One series consists of brief white-on-black texts from the Bible and other holy scripts. Another series consists of close-ups of the Grande Chartreuse monks, three at a time. The most active series shows monks walking briskly along corridors and up or down stairs on their way to the next requirement of their schedule. In a shorter series, by contrast, the camera moves slowly along similar areas that are now empty.

Into Great Silence *offers close audiovisual contact with the daily life of the men who chose to stay here, enabling viewers to experience much of the physical environment, atmosphere, activities, and observances of the Carthusian way.*

In one sense, almost everything shown in the film is part of a series, belonging as much to yesterday and tomorrow as it does to today. We remember the monk seen praying at the start of the film because he is responsible for ringing the chapel bell and is shown doing so on many occasions, often in scenes that vary slightly in camera angle and in lingering or not lingering until the arrival of other monks. There Gröning hints at what appears clearly in scenes of such repeated actions as the brisk walking and intense Gregorian chanting: for the monks, repetition is not routine but renewal.

In spite of the film's title, the soundtrack plays an important part in conveying the Carthusian way of life. Some of what we hear is the noise of practical living, such as the handsawing and chopping of firewood, the monks' boots thumping on wooden floors and stairs as they surge to and from their various offices, and the whir of electric clippers as two barber brothers shear the heads of their fellows. The main sounds of religious practice are the church bell repeatedly calling monks to prayer and the periods of a cappella Gregorian chanting.

For viewers who have only a rough idea of the Carthusian way of life two sounds are unexpected. One is speech, which is indeed forbidden in the chapel and hallways and discouraged in other parts of the monastery unless really necessary. But there are also occasions when speech is not only permitted but expected.

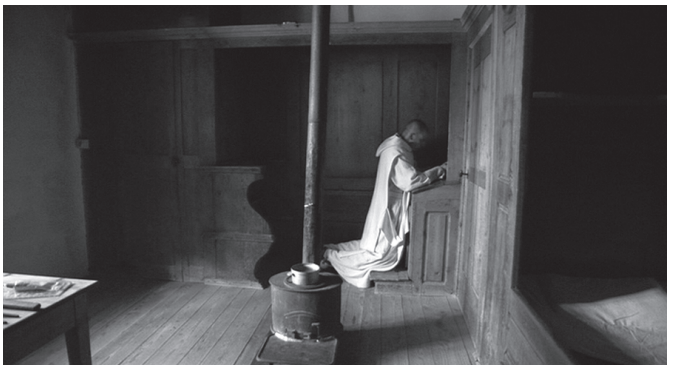
That first appears at a formal convocation in the paneled hall mentioned earlier. In the presence of all the monks, who are seated around the walls, the prior (head of the monastery) gives a speech welcoming two postulants and asks if they are ready for the next stage, as novices. After saying they are, the two young men walk around to stop in turn in front of each monk, kneel down, and then stand to exchange cheek kisses. The scene is striking in another way, since one of the novices is black while everyone else is in the monastery is white.

Even more unexpected is the practice of allowing monks to go outside one day a week and talk to one another for several hours. Gröning keeps his camera and microphone at a distance, so that it's often difficult to tell exactly who is speaking or what is being said. On one such day when there's snow on the ground a group of younger monks walk to a steepish slope and try to "ski" down on their regular boots. Several of them end up rolling and sliding, and then we hear the second unexpected sound: laughter.

The only incident in the film that aroused my nonbelief was a monk's remark that he couldn't understand why everybody doesn't love God. (The monk, who was old and blind, had a dispensation from the prior to talk with Gröning about Carthusian beliefs and practices.) Of course, it was also a reminder that Carthusians live separate from the rest of the world, without radio, television, or newspapers, and some may forget how terrible life can be for many people outside.

Even so, the film does connect the monastery with the outside world. Not with the most obvious link, however: there's no reference to the liqueurs that the Grande Chartreuse produces and sells to help support itself and other Carthusian monasteries. (In Gröning's reply to some questions he explained that this would have added complication to the film, moving it "toward the level of 'information' instead of 'experience.' Experience is what I was after.") Time in its different forms is the main connection or contrast, beginning

INTO GREAT SILENCE: SCENES FROM THE CARTHUSIAN WAY OF LIFE



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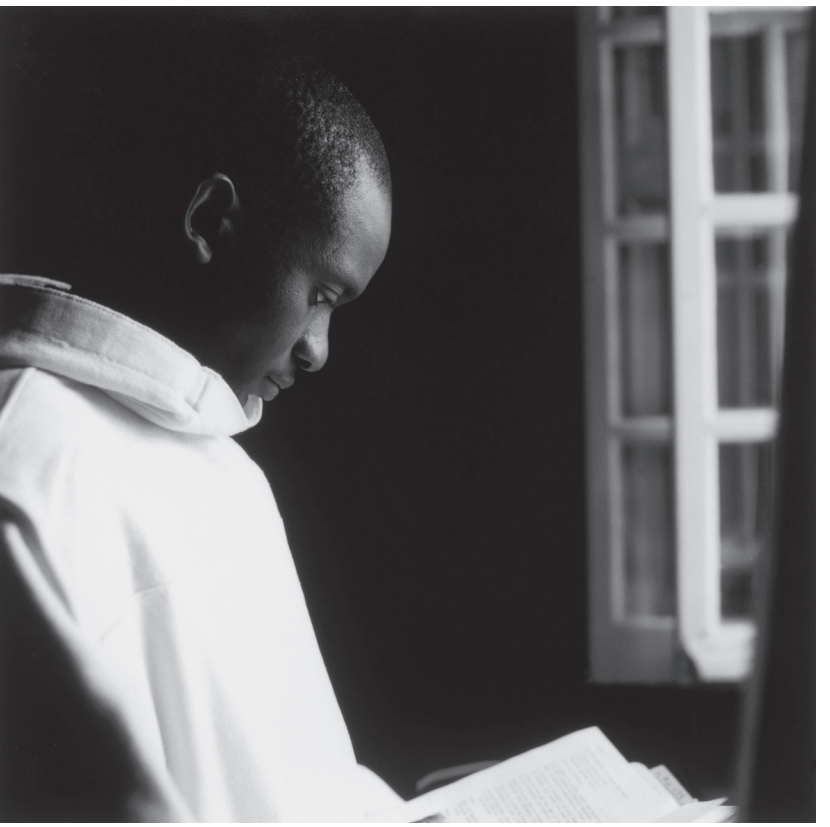

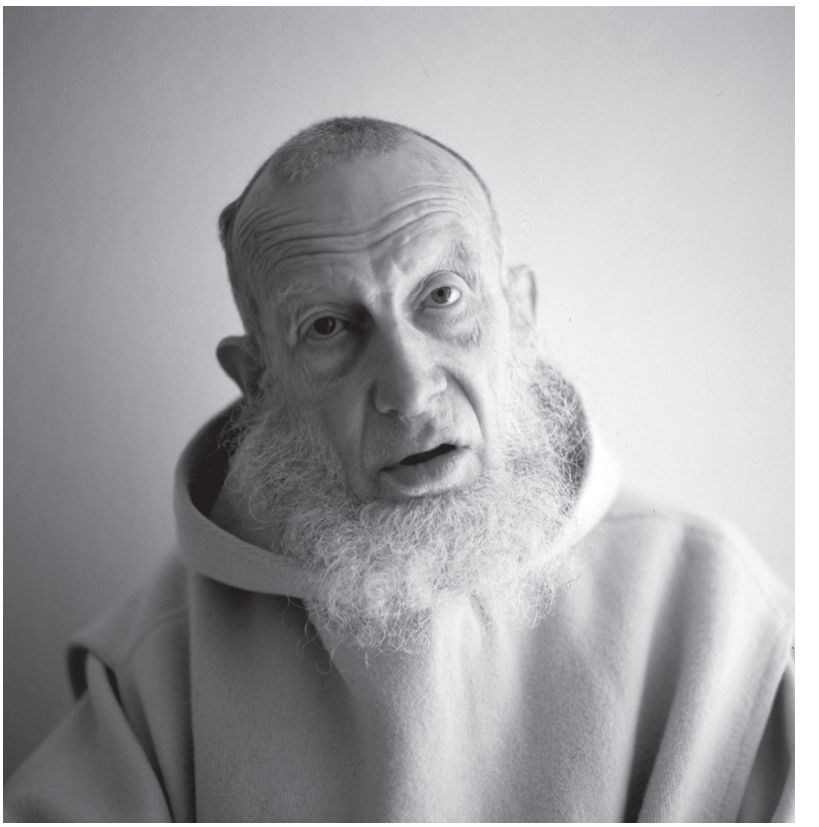

Monk portraits. © Philip Gröning / VG Bild Kunst / Zeitgeist Films Ltd.

with the monks' weekly hours outside the monastery. Then there's the change of seasons, in this case the early spring thaw, with meltwater running down onto the monastery's vegetable garden and the cook–gardener's planting of seeds from familiar small packages. The speed of modern life appears as a few brief scenes of jetliners passing overhead, plus the surprising remark heard during one of the monks' outdoor periods: "I'm flying to Seoul tomorrow." (There's a Carthusian monastery in Seoul.) Most striking of all are several brief stop-motion night scenes in which constellations flit across the horizon as if time were being dwarfed by eternity. The exterior scenes, like those inside the monastery, convey the perpetual alternation of community and solitude.

Into Great Silence not only stands out among documentaries but also deserves a place alongside such religion-inspired films as those of Robert Bresson and Carl Dreyer. That may seem a startling claim, since those two filmmakers dealt in fiction and their films often focused on the role of sin or evil in human life. In particular, several of Bresson's *Notes on the Cinematograph* (Bresson uses the word to distinguish it from what he regards as mere filmed theater) could apply to Gröning's approach to filming the Carthusians, such as "[b]e sure you have made full use of everything that is conveyed by stillness and silence," "[t]he cinematograph creator is making a voyage of discovery on an unknown planet," and "[m]y ability to make good use of technical resources diminishes as they increase." Moreover, Bresson continually insisted that actors should purge themselves of acting and become what he called *modèles*—much like the kind of focused and unselfconscious presences that we see in the Grande Chartreuse monks.

Then, too, there is something of the austerity and rural isolation that one remarks upon in the settings of several films by Bresson and Dreyer—and even a hint of the ominousness that is especially pronounced in Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932) and and Bresson's *L'Argent* (1982). Gröning makes effective use of three contrasting settings: the warm tones of the monastery's communal areas, the cool tones of the monks individual cells, and the openness of the exteriors in which the monks relax. These outdoor scenes, however, show an additional contrast that add a touch of cosmic drama to the film. The facade of the present monastery building, which dates from 1688, is freshly painted, has large windows, and looks far more like an open residence than a closed retreat. Around it, however, are dark craggy mountains, of which the closest is topped by a huge sloping slab of sharp-edged rock that appears on the point of falling. In short, the film offers what could be seen as a visual threat of evil against innocence.

A gathering. © Philip Gröning / VG Bild Kunst / Zeitgeist Films Ltd.

From a different viewpoint, that of the outside world where success is too often measured in sheer numbers, the Carthusian order may also seem extraordinarily fragile. In the scene where the two novices are received, all thirty-odd members of the Grande Chartreuse are present—and this is the largest Carthusian monastery. In all, the Carthusians consist of some 370 monks in nineteen Charterhouses and seventy-five nuns in five others—a total too small to fill a multiplex. But Gröning shows us the hidden drama of the Grande Chartreuse continuing not only separate from, but also partly within the world that seems to have no time for it.

There are two further aspects of the film that make it more than an ordinary documentary. The absence of dramatic dialogue, expository voiceover, and incidental music, along with the distancing of everyday speech in the outdoor scenes, creates a soundtrack unlike that of any other film I have seen. (Distinctive soundtracks are the hallmark of notable films that are as different from *Into Great Silence* as from one another, such as David Lynch's *Eraserhead* [1977] for its continual uneasy background noises, Victor Erice's *Dream of Light* [1992] for the long speechless sequences of painter Antonio López at work, and Aleksandr Sokurov's *Oriental Elegy* [1996] for its eerie superimposition of Russian and Japanese voices.)

The second reason for the film's distinction is even simpler. Since Gröning lived in the monastery for half a year, following the monks' schedule as closely as possible, his film reflects the view of an insider almost as much as an outsider. Few if any viewers will be able to picture the layout of the monastery's interior or relate it to the exterior, and it doesn't matter: the important point is that Gröning became at home there, and his film reflects that familiarity. Viewers don't need footnotes or a floor plan of the monastery any more than they need a voiceover or incidental music in order to experience the compelling strangeness of the Carthusian world.

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ABSTRACT A review of Philip Gröning's documentary about the Grande Chartreuse monastery in France. Particular attention is paid to the film's use of available light and speech (and other sounds) in its successful attempt, in a manner that arguably evokes Bresson and Dreyer, to depict the day-to-day experience of Carthusian monks.

KEYWORDS documentary, soundtrack, Philip Gröning, Carthusians, religion and film

CREDITS *Die Grosse Stille*. Director, producer, writer, photographer, editor: Philip Gröning. Coproducers: Michael Weber, Andres Pfaeffli, Elda Guidinetti. © 2005 Philip Gröning Film. U.S. distribution: Zeigeist Films. DVD: Soda Pictures (U.K.)

THE LIVES OF OTHERS

MATTHEW H. BERNSTEIN ON AN EMOTIVE SURVEILLANCE THRILLER SET IN COMMUNIST EAST GERMANY

Like Wolfgang Becker's *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003), Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's Oscar-winning *The Lives of Others* (2005) dramatizes life in East Germany before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall; both films are examples of V*ergangenheitsbewaeltigung*, of coming to terms with Germany's past. Both delineate major ironies of life in the GDR. In Becker's film, the paradox revealed is that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the arrival of capitalism make life in reunified East Germany nearly identical to its former Communist existence. In *The Lives of Others*, the chief irony arises from the fact that two characters most devoted to the ideals of Communism—a state-sanctioned playwright and the Stasi agent assigned to spy on him—find themselves compelled by personal integrity to revolt against the state.

Indeed, von Donnersmarck has been at pains to differentiate his film from *Goodbye, Lenin!*, stating in the press kit that he did not wish to depict East German existence as "funny or moving." *Goodbye, Lenin!* depicted partly as farce a devoted son's determination to keep his ardently Communist, frail mother alive by sustaining the illusion that East Germany still existed after the wall came down. *The Lives of Others* traces the opposite trajectory: the tearing away of illusions ardently held by East Germans before the wall has fallen. In addition, *The Lives of Others* explores canonical themes of surveillance and voyeurism, using hierarchies of knowledge and recalling Hitchock's best thrillers and especially Coppola's *The Conversation* (1973).

As in so many thrillers, the two men at the center of *The Lives of Others*—Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch), the only East German dramatist read in the West, and the forlorn, solitary spy Hauptmann Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe, who died of cancer just this past summer)—share much in common. They both comprehend the lives of others, but in completely different ways. Dreyman's artistic and political success arises from his powers of empathy: "Put yourself in his shoes for a moment," he asks the all-powerful Culture Minister Hempf (Thomas Thieme), speaking of a beloved former theater director, the blacklisted but still devotedly Socialist Albert Jerska (Volkmar Kleinert). But Dreyman also defends the GDR and Stasi to his lover and star of his plays, Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedeck). When discussing the government's denial of a permit to visit the West to their dissident journalist friend Paul Hauser (Hans-Uwe Bauer), Dreyman asks, "Would you let him go if you were in their [the government's] position?" Where Dreyman's generous spirit enables him, often to his own detriment, to recognize that everyone has their reasons, Wiesler simply spies on them and manipulates suspects into confessing their crimes.

Indeed, the opening sequence of *The Lives of Others* shows us how good Wiesler is at his job—and how good von Donnersmarck is at his. Wiesler interrogates a young father about his neighbors' flight to the West. We sympathize with the vulnerable "Prisoner 227" as Wiesler cruelly deprives him of sleep for forty hours, and responds to 227's repeated protests of innocence by threatening to arrest his wife and put his children "into state care." Their utter imbalance of power is compelling. Yet von Donnersmarck further intercuts this interrogation with Wiesler's class, where he trains future Stasi agents. As Wiesler plays the reel-to-reel tape recording of the interrogation, we cut back to the actual questioning (as in *The Conversation*). Wiesler stops the tape and explains to his students (and to us) the intricate details of Stasi operations. We agree with a student who calls this inhumane treatment. Yet as the interrogation unfolds, Prisoner 227 finally confesses that he aided the escape. The confession only reinforces the Stasi's belief that human beings can be neatly categorized and managed, in the manner of Pavlov, to ensure the state's dominance. (Wiesler's supervisor endorses a study of five types of artists and their response to Stasi abuse.) We are perhaps reminded of ruthlessly thorough Hollywood Nazis, such as von Scherbach (Otto Preminger) and his lieutenants

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Left to right: Sebastian Koch, Thomas Thime, and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck during the filming of *The Lives of Others*.

Photo: Hagen Keller. © 2006 Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.

in Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17* (1953), who anticipate and kill any American POWs who try to escape. In a later scene in *The Lives of Others*, a Stasi officer calls in a "graphologist," whose extensive knowledge of typewriter models—and which writers, East and West, use them—is simultaneously astonishing and funny. But art imitates life here. Von Donnersmarck's mother escaped (before his birth) to the West and consequently suffered long waits at the border to visit relatives in the GDR; Mühe claimed to have discovered after the fall of the wall that his wife, a member of his theater troupe, had informed on him to the Stasi.

Wiesler spies on Dreyman at the command of his immediate superior and former classmate, Oberstleutnant Anton Grubitz (Ulrich Tukor), chief of the Stasi's Culture Department, who takes the agent to Dreyman's latest play. Like characters in a Lubitsch society comedy, Wiesler and Grubnitz observe everyone—particularly Dreyman in his box seat, and bigwig Hempf in the orchestra—rather than the actors on stage. This is one recurring joke throughout *The Lives of Others*—in a film that depicts the power of art and artists to transform lives, the Stasi agents and government officials, for all their powers of surveillance, are utterly ignorant of and oblivious to the virtues of the arts and artists, and human nature. Wiesler's young assistant consistently misunderstands what Dreyman and Sieland say to each other in their most intimate moments—thinking, for example, that her promises of strength and fidelity to Dreyman refer to her determination to be a better housekeeper. (Still, he expresses delight in being assigned to monitor artists, who are more sexually active than priests and peace activists.)

Such ignorance and arrogance appear at all levels of the government. Hempf self-importantly interrupts a cast party to pay clichéd tributes to Dreyman and Siedel. He seems culturally deaf; we later realize he is jealous of Dreyman. Hempf is also a glutton, a bloated, Groszian caricature in a film that renders its other characters naturalistically. As Hempf

subsequently discusses the artist's role in socialist society with Dreyman and commands him to concede that no blacklist exists in East Germany, he holds a huge chocolate pastry in his capacious hands just inches from his mouth, a detail highlighted as von Donnersmarck cuts to a reverse angle. We will see too much of this official sodden with power—including a true beauty-and-the-beast scene in which he virtually rapes Sieland in the capacious back seat of his constantly roving government limousine (really his office), having threatened her that if she does not submit, she will never act again. She submits, and he flatters himself that she wants him. Unlike Joseph and Maria Tura (Jack Benny and Carole Lombard) in Lubitsch's *To Be or Not To Be* (1942), Dreyman and Sieland cannot dance lightly around a totalitarian regime.

Grubitz and Kampf embody the ways in which East German officials deployed surveillance and repression to serve personal ends. Grubitz is an utter careerist. At Dreyman's play opening, he is flabbergasted when Wiesler finds the playwright worth spying on. (Wiesler immediately calls Dreyman "arrogant," but he also sees the playwright talking with a man later identified as the dissident journalist Hauser—another example of the countless, apt details—many apparent only after a second viewing—with which von Donnersmarck imbues his film.) But when Hempf asks Grubitz after the show if he thinks Dreyman is as "good" as he seems, Grubitz appropriates Wiesler's suspicions. Through an earlier dialogue exchange, we learn that Grubitz has plagiarized Wiesler's ideas before to rise in the ranks. Here, we momentarily enjoy the irony of Hempf's praise for Grubitz's false acuity, commenting that ordinary, mediocre men would think Dreyman beyond reproach—precisely Grubitz's view of Dreyman. Another irony is that Hempf is not truly suspicious, just anxious to get Dreyman out of the way.

So everything is in place for Wiesler to destroy Dreyman. The Stasi perfectly illustrate Foucault's proposition in *Discipline and Punish* that "the exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation." No wonder the film begins in 1984. But in *The Lives of Others* observation and coercion break down as both Dreyman and Wiesler revolt against the surveillance state. The two men are provoked by different events. The suicide of Jerska galvanizes the gullible, complacent playwright into researching and publishing an expose of suicide rates in East Germany for *Der Spiegel*, using a smuggled tiny typewriter with red ink which he hides under a removable doorsill in his apartment. More dramatically, Wiesler realizes that his latest assignment does not fulfill the state's ideals but only Grubitz's careerist goals and Hempf's lust for Siedel ("the loveliest pearl of the GDR," he calls her). When Wiesler discovers and reports to Grubitz Hempf's trysts with Sieland, Grubitz instructs Wiesler not to make any written record: "We're helping a committee member get a rival out of the way . . . Do you know what this could mean for my career? And for yours?" Wiesler retorts: "Is this why we joined the Stasi? . . . The Party's shield and sword?"

> ***Wiesler's transformation is the central piece of evidence in Dreyman's debate with Hempf: people can and do change. So do countries. That change—life in Eastern Berlin after the wall comes down—is shown in the coda of* The Lives of Others.**

Wiesler comes to realize all too well what this assignment means, because von Donnersmarck, with Koch and Gedeck's help, has created in Dreyman and Siedel an utterly engaging, well-intentioned, sympathetic (and yes, photogenic) romantic couple. Wiesler becomes enamored of their passionate, idealistic life of art and inspiration—he even steals Dreyman's volume of Brecht writings to peruse for himself. He is visibly moved by Dreyman's playing of a fictional piano piece (by composer Gabriel Yared), "Sonata for a Good Man." (Von Donnersmarck has identified Lenin's comment that listening to Beethoven's "Apassionata" would prevent him from completing the Russian Revolution—a comment which Dreyman repeats to Sieland after he plays the sonata—as the starting point of the film.) Wiesler gets so involved in other peoples's lives that he cannot do his job. From spying on Dreyman and Siedel, Wiesler slowly begins to intervene in their lives in ways they cannot know. He arranges for Dreyman to discover Siedel's trysts with Hempf and even personally accosts her later in a nearby bar—assuming the pose of one of her theater fans, her "audience," which of course he is in more ways than she thinks—to dissuade her from meeting Hempf again. Wiesler and Dreyman are now both (as Anthony Lane calls them) puppeteers: in Dreyman's case, creating lives and dialogue on stage from the wings, and in Wiesler's case, rearranging lives from the attic of Dreyman's apartment building. Von Donnersmarck constantly crosscuts between them with parallel camera movements or even graphic matches to visualize their similarities.

By the last third of the film, Wiesler goes so far as to cover for Dreyman, refusing to report that the playwright is writing his article (taking Grubitz's instructions to not report "everything" much further than Grubitz imagined). Instead, Wiesler maintains Dreyman's charade that he is drafting a play to celebrate the GDR's fortieth anniversary. Dreyman

PARALLELS AND IRONIES IN *THE LIVES OF OTHERS*

© Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion. DVD: Buena Vista Home Entertainment (Germany)

Echoes of *Open City* Top: © Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion. DVD: Buena Vista Home Entertainment (Germany) Bottom: © 1946 Mayer-Burstyn Inc. DVD: Arrow Films (U.K.)

for the first time is writing non-fiction; Weisler for the first time is writing utter fiction in his surveillance journals, creating scenes for a non-existent play. They have exchanged their genre specialties.

By this point, the Hitchcockian thrill of suspense in *The Lives of Others*, and the more complicated hierarchy of knowledge, is in full throttle. Wiesler even personally removes the incriminating typewriter from Dreyman's apartment before Grubitz can find it. Grubitz learns of its whereabouts from Siedel; he pulls her in for questioning, and she crumbles at the threat of losing her career and her supply of pills (Hempf wants her blacklisted for no longer sleeping with him). But not even Wiesler's extraordinary interventions can prevent Siedel—full of self-disgust after she has betrayed Dreyman over the article—from walking into the street to be hit by a truck. She has suffered the loss of hope that led Jerska to suicide, the very subject of Dreyman's piece. Siedel's death is the most surprising development in the entire film, and it registers as a genuinely sorrowful moment. It is as shocking in its way as the sudden killing of Pina (Anna Magnani) in Rossellini's *Open City* (1945), and just as ironic. Pina's fiancé is freed from Nazi capture in the very next scene. Siedel is unaware that Wiesler, their guardian angel, has nullified her betrayal by removing the typewriter. These echoes of Rossellini's film also connect the cinematic Stasi's ruthlessness to that of the cinematic Nazis; here they oppress their own citizens, rather than those of a former ally.

The character of Siedel is something of a stumbling block in the film; she is an insecure, pill-addicted actress who is willing to sleep with the Minister (and even Grubitz) to sustain her career. The film suggests all women are susceptible to Stasi collaboration via a subplot involving Dreyman's next-door neighbor, whom we see Wiesler deftly intimidate into silence after she accidentally sees his crew wiring Dreyman's apartment. With Siedel's multiple betrayals—sexual, political—she has far more to hide from Dreyman than he does from her. Is she simply a weak, selfish bourgeoise who wants her lover to wear ties? When Grubitz rewards her cooperation by slipping a vial of pills into her coat, I thought of another parallel with *Open City*'s all-controlling Nazi officers: the flighty Marina (Maria Michi) in *Open City*, who betrays her resistance fighter ex-lover Manfredi (Marcello Pagilero),

thereby earning a dose of cocaine and the brief possession of a fur coat. But Sieland has a far stronger conscience. After each of her rendezvous with Hempf, and after her two interrogations in which she betrays Dreyman, she immediately goes into the shower to try to wash her sins away. She has just showered and is still in her bathrobe when she kills herself.

It is interesting to consider what *The Lives of Others* would look like had its heroine been less helpless. (Her opposite number might be Rachel Stein [Carice Van Houten], the Jewish, protean resistance fighter heroine of Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* [2006], who also prostitutes herself—specifically sleeping with an SS commandant, the disillusioned Ludwig Muntze [Koch again] for the cause. Where Stein can play any role in the service of her cause—and with the threat of death hanging over her—Sieland seems incapable of pretense whenever she is off stage, in the face of losing her career.) As it is, Dreyman and his male friends never display Sieland's weaknesses—they remain upright throughout the film. Still, Sieland reminds Dreyman (and us) that he too is "in bed" with the party officials, the ultimate puppeteers.

Experts have objected that the film romanticizes Wiesler. Timothy Garton Ash, for example, writes in the *New York Review of Books* that although he had heard of Stasi agents growing disenchanted and even a very few protecting their marks, he found Wiesler's screen transformation implausible: "It would take more than the odd sonata and Brecht poem to thaw the driven puritan we are shown at the beginning." Certainly, von Donnersmarck's script follows a conventional treatment of character awakening and conversion to a more humane consciousness; indeed, much of the film's appeal resides in that change. But such criticisms ignore how carefully von Donnersmarck and Mühe (whose subtle, almost impassive performance is astonishing) portray progressive stages in Wiesler's transformation; it is hardly quick and facile. Early on, we see Wiesler in his desolate modern apartment (an unmotivated camera pan to his empty living room again echoes a comparable scene with Harry Caul [Gene Hackman] in Coppola's film) where he eats alone in front of the state-controlled news broadcast. (The entire color scheme of this very dark film contrasts the desaturated, sterile, dull hues of Wiesler's modern apartment and Stasi offices with the warmer colors of Dreyman's older Berlin apartment, with high ceilings and paneled walls.) After some time on his new assignment, Wiesler craves companionship. His sex with a house-calling prostitute is brief, and she immediately prepares to go to her next appointment. Suddenly, Wiesler's solitary existence, but also the precision of his operations—twenty minutes to wire Dreyman's flat; upbraiding his assistant for being four or five minutes late—boomerangs against him. He later even has cause to regret his aide's appearance (finally) on time for his shift—since it means Wiesler and we can no longer hear Dreyman continue to try to deter Sieland from meeting Hempf again.

Later still, a bouncing ball precedes a boy (recalling Hansl in *The Third Man* [1949]) into Wiesler's building elevator (another contrast with the playwright: we previously saw Dreyman play soccer with neighborhood kids). When the boy reveals that his father suspects Wiesler to be a Stasi agent and "a bad man," Wiesler instinctively demands to know the name of the child's … ball. Wiesler must make a conscious effort to avoid seeking out "enemies" of the state. He later hears Dreyman and Hauser plan to test for surveillance in Dreyman's apartment by sneaking Hauser across the East-West Berlin border. The listening Wiesler instinctively calls the border authorities to report this scheme, but then hangs up, muttering under his breath, "Just this once, my friend." Old habits die hard. He even comes to Grubitz's office as if to inform on Dreyman (he holds a report in his hand), but changes his mind. By the time Wiesler is forced to quiz Sieland on the whereabouts of Dreyman's typewriter, the master interrogator who instructed his class on how to break down an "arrogant" enemy of the state, must now, under the suspicious eyes of Grubitz, subject the frail actress he admires and has protected to his best questioning techniques.

Most of all, Wiesler's transformation is the central piece of evidence in Dreyman's debate with Hempf: people can and do change. So do countries. That change—life in Eastern Berlin after the wall comes down—is shown in the coda of *The Lives of Others*. Dreyman, still in mourning for Sieland and no longer state-sponsored, has not written in years. He is shocked to learn from the deposed and unhappy Hempf that in fact he was under *total* surveillance. A visit to the Stasi archives, with its surveillance files now available to any citizen, enables Dreyman to realize that an Agent HGW/XX17 not only monitored his apartment, but actively protected him.

So the tables are turned briefly as Dreyman works to track Wiesler down, finding him as he walks desolately on his postman's rounds. Yet, rather than accost and personally thank Wiesler, Dreyman gets back in his cab and goes home. In the film's final scene, Wiesler discovers, in an empty mega-bookstore, that Dreyman has written a book, *Sonata for a Good Man*, which is dedicated "with gratitude" to "Agent HGW/XX17." For the first time in the film, the hierarchy of knowledge among the major characters is level; for the first time, Wiesler half-smiles.

Yet, this ending is somewhat surprising. We might wonder why Dreyman doesn't approach Wiesler and thank him

Ulrich Mühe as Gerd Wiesler. Photo: Hagen Keller. © 2006 Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.

personally for all his acts of kindness when he finds him. Perhaps it is because he recognizes that no words of gratitude would be adequate to the occasion. But is this resolution meant to suggest that Dreyman must maintain the voyeur's distance in order to overcome his writer's block and compose his tribute to—his "report" on—this good man? Or that the voyeur's distance is still necessary, after the GDR and Stasi are gone, for gratitude to thrive? More significantly, as Garton Ash suggests, labeling Wiesler a "good man" for his one instance of humane behavior minimizes our reckoning with the many cruel acts he previously and unthinkingly performed for the Stasi. It throws off kilter the moral scheme of the film.

Still, the resolution of *The Lives of Others* is intensely satisfying. We are able at last to relax, or to weep (if we have not already done so at Sieland's suicide). This is because von Donnersmarck has succeeded in realizing a harrowing portrayal of life in the dystopia that was the GDR and the "slippery slope" by which one bad man changes course. And if *The Lives of Others* adjudges Wiesler "a good man," it is also because, like Dreyman, von Donnersmarck has a generous capacity for empathy and forgiveness. That, too, is an undeniable source of this film's *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung*, and its overwhelming impact.

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ABSTRACT This essay explores the film allusions, plot turns, hierarchies of knowledge, and most of all the multiple ironies that contribute to the extraordinary impact of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's surveillance thriller set in Communist East Germany.

KEYWORDS German cinema, surveillance, political thriller, von Donnersmarck, communism

CREDITS *Das Leben der Anderen.* Director, screenplay: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Producers: Quirin Berg, Max Wiedemann. Director of photography: Hagen Bogdanski. Editor: Patricia Rommel. Music: Gabriel Yared, Stéphane Moucha. © [2006] Wiedemann & Berg Filmproduktion. DVD: Buena Vista Home Entertainment (Germany).

"A NEW WAVE OF SPECTATORS": CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO *CLEO FROM 5 TO 7*

KELLEY CONWAY REDISCOVERS PARISIAN CINEMAGOERS' OPINIONS OF AGNÈS VARDA'S URBAN CHRONICLE

Central to the exceptionally rich film culture that existed in France from the mid-1940s to the late 60s was the "ciné-club," regular gatherings in which people came together to watch and discuss films, typically on a bi-weekly basis. Many film historians are probably aware that André Bazin, François Truffaut, and Henri Langlois were involved in ciné-clubs early in their careers, but less is known about the ways in which ciné-clubs operated and the impact they had on ordinary viewers. Two decades of ciné-club activities undoubtedly shaped the tastes and viewing strategies of an entire generation of French people. When Alain Resnais was asked in 1962 about the causes and the consequences of the French New Wave, a movement usually celebrated for its audacious directors and its rejuvenation of style, he responded: "It is less a new wave of directors of which we should speak and more a new wave of spectators. The film culture of the public is infinitely more elevated than it was ten years ago. The young generation of spectators has less prejudice and is more demanding than before. If there really exists a renewal in the current French cinema, we owe it, in large part, to this young generation of spectators."[1] Had French spectators become more "demanding" by the height of the New Wave? How might we characterize and contextualize their particular engagement with the cinema? The trajectory of Agnès Varda's *Cleo from 5 to 7* through a French ciné-club can illuminate these questions.

THE POST-WAR CINÉ-CLUB

The ciné-club had already played a key role in French film culture in the 1920s, when it elevated film to the status of art, promoted avant-garde, censored, and other non-commercial films, and encouraged an awareness of film history through its organization of retrospectives and lectures.[2] In the 1930s, after the coming of sound put a damper on the avant-garde scene, the ciné-club became a kind of sanctuary for the silent classics.[3] During the Occupation, ciné-clubs were banned, but they roared back to life in the immediate post-war period. As early as March 1945, the Fédération Française des Ciné-Clubs (FFCC) reemerged with six clubs.[4] Within one year, eighty-three clubs were in operation, with more than 50,000 members.[5] By 1962, the year in which Varda's *Cleo from 5 to 7* was released, there were approximately 500 clubs in metropolitan France alone, with an estimated membership of 200,000.[6] The number of films shown in the ciné-clubs is staggering: in 1961 alone, approximately 6000 feature films and 10,000 short films were screened in ciné-clubs.[7] Just as notable as the quantitative rejuvenation of the French ciné-club in the post-war era is the shift in the ciné-club's goals. The ciné-club recast itself at this time, showing a broader range of films and attracting members from a wider socio-economic spectrum of viewers than had its 1920s predecessors.

Film director Pierre Kast succinctly articulated the goals of the post-war ciné-club in the title of an article he wrote in 1945: "Develop Film Taste, Introduce Masterpieces, Educate the Public: That is the Task of Ciné-Clubs."[8] The goal of the revived ciné-club movement was "to form spectators both fully aware and passionate who will continue to frequent commercial cinemas, more often, if possible, but with another regard and a refined sensibility, more lucid and more acute."[9] The ciné-club attempted to form spectators in very specific ways: through its diverse programming, through film education internships, and, above all, through the *débat*, the post-screening discussion.

Ciné-club programming in the post-war era revolved around specific directors, schools, and national cinemas, and included both documentary and fiction films, shorts and features, experimental and genre films, and French and foreign titles. Not surprisingly, films by celebrated auteurs were a

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Left to right: cameraman Alain Levent, key grip Roger Scipion, and Agnès Varda shooting *Cleo from 5 to 7*.

Courtesy of Agnès Varda

mainstay of the ciné-club, including those of Orson Welles, Sergei Eisenstein, Carl Dreyer, Ingmar Bergman, Luis Buñuel, Satyajit Ray, and Jean Cocteau. The clubs also had a preference for Italian neorealism, American genre films, French avant-garde short films, and short documentaries. One particularly notable element of the ciné-club programming was its international character. Far from serving as a tool in the support of French national cinema alone, as one might expect, the ciné-club actively promoted films from the United States, Italy, Germany, Denmark, India, Russia, and Japan.

Ciné-club programming did not simply entail the dissemination of an established canon to all audiences. Vincent Pinel, a ciné-club director in the 1960s in Le Havre, emphasized in his 1964 primer the importance of making programming choices appropriate for specific audiences. "It would be aberrant to inaugurate a *ciné-club d'entrerpise* [a club for factory workers] with the projection of *Testament d'Orphée*."[10] On the other hand, Pinel noted, *Paisan* (1946) could be enjoyed by all and was thus an appropriate choice for launching a club with a bourgeois, student, or factory worker membership. The Western *3:10 to Yuma* (1957) was a particularly good choice for clubs comprised of students, rural people, and workers.[11]

In addition to tailoring the programming of films to specific sectors of the population, the ciné-club actively promoted the screening of certain films and discouraged the screenings of others. According to Pinel, the ciné-club director should not behave like a "cultural terrorist," but should also realize that not every film is worth showing in a ciné-club.[12] For example, *The Little Rebels* (1955), a film about juvenile delinquency starring Jean Gabin as a sympathetic judge, was "uninteresting" and should be avoided.[13] In contrast, *Los Olivados* (1950) was "important" and should be shown.[14] Pinel also argued that certain films possessed historical importance, but were now dated and therefore to be avoided, such as the work of Marcel Pagnol, and *King Solomon's Mines* (1950), MGM's adventure film set in Africa. Moreover, certain films by great directors were overexposed, including *Stagecoach* (1939) and *Bicycle Thieves* (1948).[15] If one nevertheless wanted to show films by Ford and De Sica respectively, Pinel advised, *The Searchers* (1956) and *Umberto D* (1951) were better choices. Echoing the discourse in *Cahiers du cinéma* and other film journals of the period, Pinel also noted the problem of an excessive investment in "good taste" or films of "quality" and argued instead for the screening of "worthy" genres like Westerns or musicals.[16] The ciné-club programming, then, clearly reveals the existence of a film canon under construction. Some films are better than others, not all films are worth showing at a ciné-club, and films can lose their allure after excessive exposure.

The ciné-club also shaped viewers' taste through *stages de formation cinématographique* (film education internships). Sponsored by the ciné-club federations, the *stages* offered film screenings, discussions, and encounters with people in the film industry. In July 1955, for example, the Fédération Française du Ciné-Club invited club directors and members to spend a week in the town of Marly-le-Roy near Paris, where it screened French, Spanish, Japanese, German, American, Mexican, and Italian films from morning until midnight.[17] An impressive array of people from the film industry spoke at that particular *stage*, including directors Luis Buñuel, Jean Grémillon, Preston Sturges, Pierre Kast, Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Abel Gance, and Jacques Prévert, critic Ado Kyrou, actor Gérard Philipe, and arthouse exhibitor Jean Tedesco. Jean Renoir and his crew took a break from the making of *French Cancan* (1955) to come speak to the group, as well. The internships give one a sense of the vitality of amateur film culture of the period: ordinary people who had no connection to the film industry could have an intense, concentrated film education experience at a moment in history when film study was not yet institutionalized in the French education system. All it required was participation in a ciné-club.

Careful programming and film education internships went hand in hand with the purposeful presentation of the film at the ciné-club screenings. For the task of introducing the film to ciné-club members and instigating a lively discussion about it, ciné-clubs had a trained *animateur* (host). Film history's most famous *animateur* is, of course, André Bazin. In the latter half of the 1940s, Bazin was not only publishing his hugely influential articles on Italian neorealism, Orson Welles, and William Wyler, but he was also making the rounds of schools, factories, union meetings, and ciné-clubs, discussing films such as Marcel Carné's *Le Jour se lève* (1939) and Renoir's *Le Crime de M. Lange* (1935).[18] The typical *animateur*, however, especially in the provinces, was more likely to be a local schoolteacher with a passion for cinema.

If the *animateur* did not possess the ability to discuss films at the level of a Bazin, there were tools to guide him. Several primers existed specifically to guide the ciné-club director in the preparation of an effective introduction and the management of a successful *débat*. One such primer was written by Max Egly, a specialist of adult education, and published in a book called *Regards neufs sur le cinéma* (*New Perspectives on the Cinema*). This book, part of a series of works devoted to topics such as photography, sport, literature, and the French song, was a joint venture of the publisher Seuil and the organization Peuple et Culture. Peuple et Culture emerged near

the end of the Occupation and was developed by resistance figures contemplating the shape of post-war French culture. The organization's basic goal was to strengthen French society by building a post-war culture common to all people, to "elevate the cultural level of those from all social milieu, particularly the working class."[19] Supported by France's Ministry of National Education, Peuple et Culture trained people—through courses, internships, and publications—to "animate" cultural organizations such as book clubs, music appreciation groups, and ciné-clubs. The ciné-club, then, was part of an extensive, well-organized post-war initiative aimed at democratizing culture.

In his essay, Egly laid out succinct phases of the ideal ciné-club discussion.[20] The *débat* should begin with the spontaneous, yet guided, expression of club members' first impressions. Egly emphasized that *animateurs* should focus on helping members develop the confidence to debate in a group: "The task of the *animateur* is not so much to speak, but to enable others to speak."[21] Next, the *débat* should isolate the film's narrative elements (key characters, themes, setting), discuss the possible "meaning" of a film, and situate the film in its historical framework. The viewers should then circle back to the narrative, pondering the ways in which the film's style operates in conjunction with the narrative. Here, Egly warned, the viewers should take special care to avoid the reduction of a film to its subject matter alone.[22] Next, the viewers should discuss the film's relationship to the director's biography and *oeuvre*. Finally, the discussion should extend to related films, literature, and other art forms.

The goals of the post-war ciné-club, in other words, were myriad and ambitious: to reach out to viewers from a wide socio-economic spectrum, expose them to a range of "good" films from a variety of national traditions, genres, and auteurs, and teach them to formulate and express publicly their opinions about the films' narrative, style, and historical context. The ciné-club did not aspire to replace the commercial cinema in its members' lives or to promote a renaissance in experimental filmmaking, as had the 1920s ciné-clubs. Instead, the post-war ciné-club invested in the formation of an active, educated viewer.

But how can we judge whether the ciné-club actually achieved its goals? After all, there is ample evidence that the post-screening *débat* often failed. Ciné-club manuals complain about the domination of the conversation by a few loquacious club members and of viewers even walking out after the film, skipping the discussion altogether.[23] The traces left by the premier of *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962) at the Ciné-Club des Avant-Premières provide evidence that the ciné-clubs had succeeded.

SCREENING *CLEO FROM 5 TO 7*

In 1962, the Ciné-Club des Avant-Premières was founded in Paris. The club was loosely affiliated with *Arts*, a respected weekly arts and culture magazine for which both Truffaut and Godard wrote in the 1950s.[24] The club chose *Cleo from 5 to 7* for its inaugural sessions not only because its leadership admired the film, but more specifically because it perceived *Cleo from 5 to 7* as potentially "disconcerting" due to "its construction, its rhythm, and its themes."[25] The club wanted to have an impact on the film's reception by the general public: "Here is the perfect example of a film that could have a dazzling career or could just as easily be a terrible flop. In our own small way, we will attempt to assure that *Cleo* is a success rather than a flop."[26]

The film, a chronicle of the movements through Paris of a beautiful, self-absorbed pop singer who anxiously awaits the results of a medical test, combines an unusual documentary texture with stylistic playfulness. The film's narrative retains considerable ambiguity: Cleo meets a sensitive soldier near the end of the film who may or may not remain important to her, and Cleo's prognosis remains unclear. Critics would ultimately celebrate the film for its psychological and documentary realism, its rigorous treatment of temporality, and its fresh way of representing the streets, cafes, and parks of Paris. Georges Sadoul called *Cleo from 5 to 7* a "true modern film, profoundly of our era" and saw it as a kind of snapshot of the year 1961: "Ninety minutes in the life of a Parisian woman can contain the anguish and the preoccupations of a nation."[27] Pierre Billard praised the film's "psychological depth," its combination of realism and stylization, and its lack of an obvious "message."[28] Jean-Louis Bory celebrated the film's emphasis on duration, its "chronological rigor" and its "subjective time."[29] For Claude Beylie, "Cleo is (among other things) the most beautiful film ever shot in and about Paris."[30] Roger Tailleur wrote in *Positif*: "*Cleo* is . . . both the freest of films and the film that is the greater prisoner of constraints, the most natural and the most formal, the most realistic and the most precious, the most moving to see and the most pleasant to watch."[31] It was an international success, but in the months before its release, the Ciné-Club des Avant-Premières wanted to register its support for *Cleo from 5 to 7* and help it find its audience.

After the screening of *Cleo from 5 to 7* in early April of 1962, members of the club in Paris and in other French cities were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of eight questions (see table overleaf).

More than 2000 people took the questionnaire home, filled it out within the required eight-day time frame, and mailed it to *Arts*. *Arts* tabulated the responses and reported

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did you like this film? Why? If you didn't like it, also say why.
2. Were you more responsive to:
   - the subject?
   - the directing?
   - the characters?
3. What moment (or scene) of the film is your favorite?
4. Did the film seem to have slow moments? When? Conversely, does the film lack a scene (or a line or an image) that would have provided for better comprehension of the storyline or the characters?
5. In your opinion, will the young woman, Cleo, die?
6. What do you think of the roles played by the male characters in this story?
7. Do you see a greater meaning in this film that goes beyond the storyline itself?
8. Will you recommend this film to your friends and family?

the results in its issue of 18–24 April. The questionnaires were then sent to Agnès Varda, who read and retained a portion of them (eighty-six, to be exact).

The questionnaires distributed at the Ciné-Club des Avant-Premières after the screenings of *Cleo from 5 to 7* in April 1962 serve as a record of viewer response to a film perceived as worthy, but "difficult." While the written responses cannot convey the ebb and flow of the ciné-club *débat*, they nevertheless amply demonstrate that ordinary viewers had indeed developed sophisticated analytical skills and a taste for unconventional films. On the whole, the viewers provided startlingly detailed and sophisticated responses, analyzing the film's style and narrative, and placing the film in the contexts of the New Wave and international film history. The questionnaires provide valuable information about art-cinema spectatorship and suggest that Resnais was correct in asserting that a "new wave of spectators" had emerged.

Immediately notable is the diversity of the respondents' professions, especially compared to the 1920s ciné-club gatherings, which tended to attract writers and artists. While a significant number of the respondents were, predictably, university students (twenty-seven out of eighty-six) or educators (six out of eighty-six), a wide range of occupations is represented. Respondents included five secretaries, three doctors, two assistant film directors, two accountants, two administrators, two pharmacists, two artists, two journalists, two civil servants, two shopkeepers, and one each of the following: librarian, publisher, bank employee, insurance inspector, silk painter, restaurateur, psychologist, engineer, nurse, dry cleaner, interior decorator, writer of radio plays, architect, editor, and translator. One respondent identified herself as a "college graduate in English." Twelve respondents did not have a profession or chose not to divulge it. Three respondents listed "cinephile" as their profession. Some of the respondents later became important members of the film community. Serge Daney, who would become France's most influential film critic in the 1970s and 1980s, filled out a questionnaire, as did Roger Diamantis, the owner of a Greek restaurant who later became—and remains—an important arthouse exhibitor in the Latin Quarter.[32] If the socio-economic make-up of this particular club does not fully reflect the Peuple et Culture dream of bringing the arts to the proletariat, it certainly reveals the existence of a fairly diverse audience for unconventional films.

The general response to *Cleo from 5 to 7* was positive. Many respondents filled out the questionnaire and then added several pages to it, sometimes in the form of a written or typed letter to Varda. Many responded to each and every question, while others left certain categories blank, or dispensed with the questionnaire altogether and simply wrote a long analysis of the film. Viewers assumed a surprising familiarity with Varda. Several asked to meet with her and one viewer even invited her to dinner. Specific scenes frequently singled out for praise in the questionnaires include the episode in the hat shop, the long taxi ride through Paris, the rehearsal with her composers, the silent film-within-the-film, and the encounter between Cleo and Antoine near the end. When asked whether they were more sensitive to the film's subject, direction, or characters, viewers frequently refused to separate these elements and instead expressed appreciation for each category or for the film as a whole. Here we can assume that the respondents had successfully absorbed the warning in the ciné-club primers about reducing a film to its subject matter or to its themes alone. Likewise, respondents tended not to object to the plot's relatively open ending. Most respondents believed Cleo has a terminal illness, but viewed the process of her transformation throughout the film as more important than her specific prognosis.

In keeping with the advice given in the ciné-club primers, the viewers of *Cleo from 5 to 7* tended to comment at length on both narrative and film style. One student from Paris commented on the contrast between color and black-and-white stock at the beginning of the film, the play of mirrors and windows in the hat shop, and the shift in the background from white to black when Cleo begins to sing her song. Another viewer, a law student from Bordeaux, responded pre-

The hat shop in *Cleo from 5 to 7*.

© 1962 Agnès Varda. DVD: Criterion Collection

cisely the way the ciné-club primers would want, establishing links between style and narrative. "The film's technique is very adapted to the characters and especially to the spirit of the author: the excellent camera movements around the piano with the bizarre musicians . . . the very good scenes in the interior of the hat shop where the apparent disorganization of the camera only shows Cleo's disarray."

Perhaps we should be cautious in assessing the extent to which viewers felt positively about *Cleo from 5 to 7*. *Arts* reported that ninety-seven percent of the respondents liked the film, but the journal had an interest in emphasizing the success of the film, due to its affiliation with Club des Avant-Première.[33] Moreover, the people who filled out the questionnaires knew that Varda would be reading their responses, so it is quite likely that many viewers expressed an inflated degree of enthusiasm for the film. Yet not all of the respondents provided positive and lengthy comments on the film. Many were content to fill out the form in a cursory fashion and several were quite critical of the film. One particularly disgruntled viewer who identified herself as a "bilingual stenographer," wrote that the film was "idiotic" and that she wanted to be reimbursed. Another viewer, a university student in Paris, was "bored" by the film, finding Cleo "egotistical" and the solider "ugly" and "without charm." Yet, surprisingly, even viewers who disliked *Cleo from 5 to 7* provided subtle comments about the film's style, discussing individual scenes and shots in detail. For example, one viewer who objected to many things in the film observed: "The film is a kind of photographic reportage with sound, a *cinéma-vérité* on a star, in the streets of Paris . . . in a hat store, the singing star's 'studio,' and a sculpture studio. It is a visual magazine, a kind of filmic *Elle* or *Marie France* that one flips through, [seeing] a model trying on hats [and] a female taxi driver recounting an attack."

Here, it is as if the viewer is following Egly's exhortation to locate connections between films and other kinds of texts: cinéma-vérité documentary, photojournalism, and women's magazines. This viewer even suggested that the film's style invites a particular viewing mode: one "flips through" the film. Surprisingly, the viewer's denigration of *Cleo from 5 to 7*—he linked it, after all, to a lowbrow cultural object, the woman's magazine—coexisted with his admiration of the film's settings and cinematography. Cleo's strolls through Paris, he noted, evoke those of Jeanne Moreau in Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* (1957) and the film's cinematography is "remarkable."

Another viewer compared *Cleo* unfavorably to Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1961), but commented on Varda's use of color stock in the film's prologue, and on specific edits. He

C I N E - C L U B

des

AVANT - PREMIERES

140 rue du Fg St-Honoré

PARIS 8°

A 4

QUESTIONNAIRE

sur

" C L E O D E 5 A 7 "

d'Agnès Varda

Prière de nous adresser votre réponse dans les 8 jours suivant la projection et

votre réponse sera transmise au

metteur en scène

Nom : DANEY
Prénom : Serge
Adresse : 1 rue des Taillandiers
Ville : Paris
Profession : Etudiant mais surtout cinéphile

1/ Avez-vous aimé ce film ? BEAUCOUP

Pourquoi ?
~~La beauté~~ L'intelligence, la finesse, l'acuité, l'humour du regard qu'Agnès Varda pose sur le monde transmue toute chose et la rend belle, étrange, inquiétante.
Ce film est la conclusion, l'aboutissement de tout un cinéma dit "littéraire" qui passe par Resnais et Antonioni ; mais ici, je crois que l'élément littéraire disparaît (malgré quelques provocations comme le découpage en chapitres) et débouche sur une beauté purement cinématographique

Si vous ne l'avez pas aimé, dites aussi pourquoi.

2/ Avez-vous été davantage sensible :

- au sujet ? SECONDAIRE, n'est qu'un prétexte à une mise-en-scène ....
- à la réalisation ? MERVEILLEUSE. pleine d'inventions - photo très belle.
- aux personnages ? CORINNE MARCHAND : EXTRAORDINAIRE. Le film vaut d'être vu rien que pour elle

3/ Quel moment (ou scène) du film préférez-vous ?
LA REPETITION DES CHANSONS CHEZ CORINNE.
DOROTHEE BLANK VUE PAR LA VITRE D'UN TAXI, MONTANT DES ESCALIERS.
SCENE DU PARC MONTSOURIS.

4/ Le film vous a-t-il paru comporter des longueurs ? A quel moment ?
NON

Inversement, manque-t-il une scène (ou une réplique, ou une image) pour une meilleure compréhension de l'anecdote ou des personnages ?
Il faut juger ce qui est sur l'écran et qui forme un tout et non pas ce qu'on aurait voulu y voir.

5/ A votre avis, cette jeune femme, Cléo, est-elle condamnée ?
AUCUNE IMPORTANCE – ce qui compte c'est le regard qu'on jette sur le monde lorsqu'on se croit condamné

6/ Que pensez-vous du rôle que jouent les personnages masculins dans cette histoire ?
Chacun reflète un aspect de la vie de Cléo. L'amant correspond à tout ce qu'il y a de mondain, de frelaté (scène de la modiste) chez Cléo, le pianiste correspond au métier de Cléo, à son art et enfin Antoine est une sorte de découverte par Cléo d'un aspect inconnu d'elle-même ; un amour simple et profond qu'elle réalise n'avoir jamais connu jusqu'à la fin du film. Cléo, grâce à ces 3 hommes, se découvre elle-même.

7/ Voyez-vous à ce film une signification qui dépasse l'anecdote elle-même ?
La morale pourrait être une phrase de Sénèque : "Il faut vivre comme si l'on devait mourir le lendemain". Ainsi chaque chose prend une valeur, un relief nouveau et permet de déboucher sur une sorte de lucidité et sur l'amour.

8/ Ecouragerez-vous votre entourage, vos amis, à aller voir ce film ?
Absolument

C I N E - C L U B

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A 4

QUESTIONNAIRE

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" C L E O DE 5 A 7 "

d'Agnès Varda

Prière de nous adresser votre réponse dans les 8 jours suivant la projection et

votre réponse sera transmise au

metteur en scène

Nom : [redacted]
Prénom : [redacted]
Adresse : [redacted]
Ville : (SEINE)
Profession : Cinéphile d'abord, étudiant ensuite.

1/ Avez-vous aimé ce film ? énormément

Pourquoi ? 1)il montre de façon éclatante à ceux qui en doutaient encore ce que pourraient apporter au cinéma quelques femmes ne manquant ni d'intelligence ni de gout 2)il réalise l'alliance réputée impossible entre l'intelligence et la simplicité.

Si vous ne l'avez pas aimé, dites aussi pourquoi.

3)il réalise le désir de Zavattini et des compères de l'école neo-réaliste italienne:filmer 90 minutes de la vie d'un homme(ou d'une femme)

2/ Avez-vous été davantage sensible :

- au sujet ?
- à la réalisation ?
- aux personnages ?

Je renonce à dissocier et à hierarchiser les élements de mon plaisir;peut etre,à la réflexion,la mise en scène est elle ce qu'il y a de plus beau,de plus neuf de plus profond dans le film.

3/ Quel moment (ou scène) du film préférez-vous ? La répetition des chansons, la descente de Cleo dans l'escalier,le moment ou Dorothée quitte son amie dans le taxi et gravit l'escalier d'une démarche qui n'est pas sans rappeler les films de J.Demy.

4/ Le film vous a-t-il paru comporter des longueurs ? A quel moment ? le film n'est ennuyeux à aucun moment,ce qui constitue une véritable prouesse;

Inversement, manque-t-il une scène (ou une réplique, ou une image) pour une meilleure compréhension de l'anecdote ou des personnages ?

Je ne pense pas;

5/ A votre avis, cette jeune femme, Cléo, est-elle condamnée ? c'est un problème similaire à celui que certains se posaient à la fin d'Hiroshima;il me semble assez secondaire.

6/ Que pensez-vous du rôle que jouent les personnages masculins dans cette histoire ? Je répondrais à votre question par une autre question:j'aimerais en effet savoir si l'ordre dans lequel apparaissent les 3 personnages masculins que Cleo aime successivement ne correspond pas à sa libération progressive des contraintes et des gens qui la méprisent;le jeune soldat etant celui qui la respecte le plus;

7/ Voyez-vous à ce film une signification qui dépasse l'anecdote elle-même ? Certes;on peut d'ailleurs considérer "Cleo"sous plusieurs angles;il me semble que c'est avant tout un film sur et pour le bonheur.

8/ Encouragerez-vous votre entourage, vos amis, à aller voir ce film ? Défendre"Cleo de 5 à 7"c'est en meme temps défendre le cinéma français dont le film d'Agnès Varda constitue jusqu'à ce jour la page la plus bouleversante et la plus inattendue;je vais donc encourager au maximum mes amis à aller voir ce film admirable en espérant que le probable succès commercial du film permettra à Agnès Varda de tourner d'autres chefs d'oeuvres et de conserver ainsi pendant longtemps la première place dans le peloton de tete du cinéma français.

complained that the scene in the hat shop is "too much like a romance novel" and he even speculated that a costume worn by Cleo was previously used in Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961). The viewer disliked *Cleo from 5 to 7*, yet took it seriously enough to watch it carefully and to dissect its visual style.

The ciné-club members' ability to discuss both style and narrative is notable, but equally remarkable is their ability to place the film in the context of film history. Sometimes, this comparative activity works in a negative sense. Viewers specified what the film *is* by saying what it is *not*. For example, a university student from Paris distinguished *Cleo* from Hollywood cinema, noting the film's lack of a concluding kiss: "Everyone was waiting . . . with a sort of conditioned reflex, for a kiss, like in all American films, which resemble each other . . . and then, no. Three little notes and it was over! Ha! If you had seen the theater, in which we behaved exactly like Pavlov's dog. [It was as if one had] conducted an experiment on conditioned reflex . . . The audience let out a little cry as if it was disappointed that one had not flattered and exploited its sexual urges!! This was good; you brought us out of our routine."

A student from Valence distinguished *Cleo* from "traditional cinema" for its relative de-dramatization. "The film pulls the spectator out of his comfort. If someone asked us what we just saw, we would easily respond: nothing. There is no dramatic event, no theatrical coup . . . We are offered insignificant, unoriginal, unlinked facts. And yet we are moved, touched, troubled." Others linked *Cleo from 5 to 7* in a positive manner to specific films. To the question "Would you encourage your friends to see this film?" a medical student replied, "That depends. To love this film, it is necessary, I believe, to have loved *Pickpocket*, for example, and perhaps also *Lola*." The student from Valence revealed her familiarity with other eras and traditions of filmmaking in her response to the same question. "As for me, I know that I can place *Cleo from 5 to 7* in my imaginary cinematheque next to *Night and Fog* and *A Day in the Country*."

A law student living in Bordeaux wrote that the tracking shots in the hospital garden reminded him of the tracking shots in Resnais's *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959) and the character of Cleo recalled Lola in Jacques Demy's *Lola* (1961). The depth of field used in Cleo's apartment reminded him of *Citizen Kane* (1941), no less. Another viewer disliked the film's visual style, but argued that Cleo was a new kind of heroine with links to other New Wave female protagonists: "This is a delicious painting of a woman. Corinne Marchard is, I believe, the most 'true' of the modern heroines. These last months have been full of them! Bardot in *Vie Privée*, Moreau in *Jules et Jim*, Karina in *Une Femme est une femme* and not long ago, Anouk Aimé in *Lola*. Cleo adds a character to the New Wave's gallery of 'modern heroines.'"

Viewers also placed the film in the context of Varda's own work, citing her first feature, *La Pointe Courte* (1956) and the three short films she made in the late 1950s. One viewer observed that Varda's short film *L'Opéra Mouffe* (1958) helped him understand *Cleo from 5 to 7*, since both allow us to "enter into the psychological world of [a] woman." Viewers were thus able to place *Cleo from 5 to 7* in several contexts: the French New Wave, film history more generally, and Varda's *oeuvre*.

EDUCATING AUDIENCES

The questionnaires on *Cleo from 5 to 7* in the Club des Avant-Premiers demonstrate that the pedagogical goals of the ciné-club had indeed been achieved. The club chose to celebrate the work of a marginalized filmmaker whose works were understood as "difficult" and thus adhered to the longstanding ciné-club tradition of exposing viewers to unconventional films. The respondents wrote of Varda as an auteur, linking *Cleo from 5 to 7* to her earlier films and characterizing Varda's thematic and stylistic preoccupations. Not only did the viewers possess a context for Varda's films, they had a broader understanding of film history, reflected in references to Antonioni, Renoir, and Welles. Above all, the respondents were sensitive to film narrative and style: they wrote of the overall arc of the film's narrative and its unconventional conclusion and provided detailed commentary on lighting, camera movement, and set design. The questionnaires thus reveal the existence of a cultivated and confident arthouse spectator keenly attuned to matters of film form, style, and narrative.

The questionnaires are also interesting for what they reveal about Varda's conception of her viewers. It was not common practice to organize test screenings of films in 1960s France, so Varda stands out for her desire to test the effect of her film on the spectators. The questionnaires confirmed for Varda that viewers could tolerate ambiguity. "I understood that one should never underestimate the intelligence and comprehension of the audience, despite what professional distributors and the purveyors of big spectacles say."[34] In her subsequent filmmaking practice, Varda would continue to solicit her viewers' opinions in both formal and informal ways, but this tendency reached its apogee in 2002 with *Two Years Later* (2002). This hour-long documentary, made as a supplement for the DVD release of Varda's documentary *The Gleaners and I* (2000), revisits several of the gleaners

profiled in that feature. Less predictably, however, *Two Years Later* pays tribute to the viewers of *The Gleaners and I*. Inspired by the overwhelming number of thoughtful responses she received to the film, Varda tracked down several of her fans, interviewed them on camera, and incorporated them in the film.

A more detailed profile of the "demanding" viewer intuited by Alain Resnais in 1962 emerges. This new spectator, nurtured in the context of post-World War II efforts at cultural democratization, likely believed he had a right to access the arts, to experience cinema, music, theater, and literature, no matter his socio-economic origins. This viewer tended not to make a living in the arts or have links to the film industry, but nevertheless wanted to view and discuss films on a regular basis. This spectator understood that non-commercial cinema required the support of viewers, and perceived himself an actor on the cultural scene, capable of shifting the fortunes of individual films and of having an impact on film culture more generally. This viewer had a nuanced understanding of the New Wave and some understanding of world film history, was open to new storytelling strategies, had developed a vocabulary for describing film style, and was sensitive to the relationship between film style and narrative. In sum, the ciné-club viewer was "active"—both at screenings of individual films and in relation to the larger filmgoing community.

This "new wave of spectators" did not burst forth spontaneously in 1959, any more than the New Wave films themselves did. It was formed over time, in large part by the programming choices and the pedagogical strategies of the ciné-clubs. The French ciné-club taught an entire generation of university students, factory workers, and lawyers to value cinema as an art form and to view and discuss publicly a wide array of challenging films. The ciné-club's importance extends well beyond the French post-war context. Along with its American counterpart, the film society, the ciné-club contributed quite directly to the construction of a canon of film "masterpieces" whose influence persists to this day. Pinel asserted that the ciné-club was responsible for saving certain films from oblivion, including *Ossessione* (1943), *I Vitelloni* (1953), *L'Atalante* (1934), and *Lumière d'été* (1943).[35] The FFCC, for its part, claimed in 1962 to have contributed decisively to the valorization of *M* (1931), *La Terra Trema* (1947), *Citizen Kane*, *Il Grido* (1957), *Cronaca di un amore* (1950), and *Ikiru* (1952), as well as "the great classics of the Soviet Cinema."[36] That we still watch, analyze, and debate the strategies of American genre films, Italian neorealism, Soviet montage films—and New Wave trailblazers like *Cleo from 5 to 7*—is the result, in part, of the efforts of the post-war French ciné-club.

This article could not have been written without the generosity of Agnès Varda, who granted me access to the archives of Ciné-Tamaris, provided the photograph taken on the set of *Cleo from 5 to 7*, and granted permission to reprint the questionnaire filled out by Serge Daney.

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ABSRACT The ciné-club was central to French film culture in the 1950s and 60s. Analysis of ciné-club programming, educational activities, and of questionnaires filled out at the premier of Agnès Varda's *Cleo from 5 to 7* reveals that the ciné-club powerfully shaped viewers' tastes and viewing skills.

KEYWORDS ciné-club, spectatorship, New Wave, Varda, cinema audiences

YOUTUBE: WHERE CULTURAL MEMORY AND COPYRIGHT CONVERGE

LUCAS HILDERBRAND CONSIDERS TO WHAT EXTENT THE INCREASED ACCESS THAT YOUTUBE ENABLES IS OUTWEIGHED BY THE ONLINE REGULATION IT PROMPTS

Let's begin with a clip: William Shatner's infamous 1986 appearance on *Saturday Night Live* when he told a convention of Trekkies to "get a life" during a sketch. This scene signaled a defining moment in media reflexivity and public awareness of fan cultures, as well as inspired the opening of Henry Jenkins's 1992 book *Textual Poachers*. The first time I presented some of the material that follows, I used a clip of this sketch as an illustration of content uploaded to YouTube that reflects and replays pop-cultural memory. But by the time I reworked my presentation for a conference about a month later, the clip had disappeared. Perhaps something like this has happened to you, too.

YouTube has become the go-to website for finding topical and obscure streaming video clips, but everyday experiences also indicate how fleeting such access can be. Viewers and academics have quickly come to treat the site as an informal archive of television texts.Yet, as I argue in this article, even though YouTube and sites like it have expanded access to a rich spectrum of such material and suggested the potential for democratization of media memories and flows, they also introduce new ways to regulate and deny access to content under the guise of enforcing copyright protection.

WEB VIDEO

At the forefront of web video, YouTube has been called "viral," "revolutionary," and a "phenomenon." Within a few short months of the streaming video website's public launch in December 2005, tens of millions of visitors daily used the site to access television clips online and, in many cases, to post some of their own. Further marking YouTube the medium of its moment, *Time* magazine named "You" (referencing YouTube) the Person of the Year for 2006.[1] Rather than being promoted by multi-million-dollar branding campaigns by major networks or tech firms, YouTube became popular by word of mouth—which in the Internet era means forwarded email links, blogs, and MySpace profiles. (Or, for those older than the "Me Media" generation, articles in the *New York Times* or elsewhere.) The videos available on YouTube include home videos and remixes, up-to-the-minute television excerpts, music videos, trailers, commercials, and highlights from television history posted by users—and increasingly by producers and the networks themselves. (For commentary on the site's content, see the sidebar "The Clip Canon.")

Despite all the hype surrounding the speed of YouTube's popularity, television–computer convergence has been a long-expected prospect. In the mid-1990s, tech companies, networks, and Internet service providers were already speculating about their future merger and the resulting potential for exact target marketing.[2] Microsoft purchased WebTV in 1996 but failed to capture a media monopoly to complement its software empire. In the intervening decade, digital developments such as DVDs, DVRs (Digital Video Recorders, such as TiVo), video-on-demand services, peer-to-peer (p2p) file-sharing networks, and iPods have contributed to the changes in how viewers receive and watch television. The swiftness with which the stakes surrounding YouTube have changed in its first year and a half demonstrate just how difficult it is to rigorously assess cultural and technological developments in their present moment. For instance, an otherwise insightful book about "the transition from network to networked TV" published as recently as 2006 completely missed the YouTube phenomenon.[3] With the expansion of high-speed connections and growing computer memory capacities, Internet video distribution—from BitTorrent downloading to short-form streaming—has at long last become viable on a massive scale. Yet, when the promise of television online finally became palpable, it was not in the way corporations and the digirati had predicted in the 1990s. Indeed, if the histories of communications technologies have taught us anything, audiences rarely adopt and use media in the ways they were originally envisioned. YouTube, like popular p2ps

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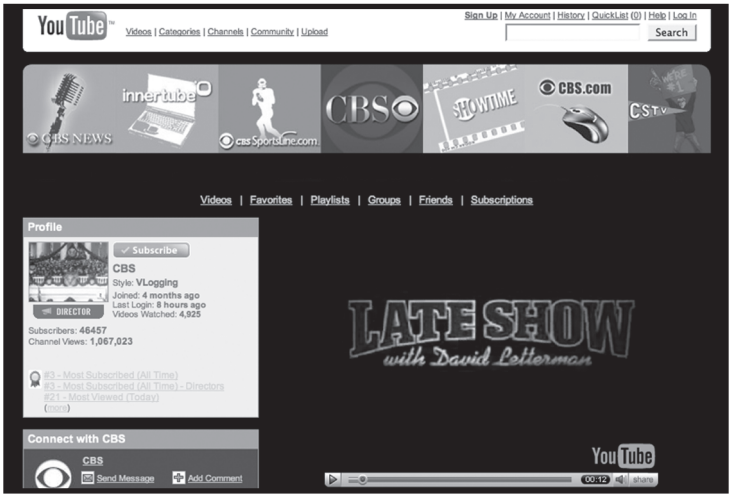
before it, was developed by a couple of young guys who wrote the basic programming code and millions of home viewers who developed its uses.[4]

YouTube and similar sites offer new and remediating relationships to texts that indicate changes and acceleration of spectatorial consumption. YouTube's success has been attributed in large part to its user-friendliness. Users do not need to log-in in order to view clips, and videos start streaming as soon as the webpage loads, so there is no need to worry about software compatibility, downloading files, or even clicking the "play" button. On the interface, videos appear with a scrollable sidebar of other videos that search results have concluded are of related interest, so users can click through from one clip to another without doing multiple searches. This mode of hyperlinking effectively replicates channel-surfing and introduces non-narrative seriality to the viewing experience. Frequently, as well, searches for an iconic or controversial moment of television will yield multiple clips of the same content, with minor variations in image quality, running time, titling, keywords, or spellings. Deciding which clip among the batch to view may depend upon clues such as the thumbnail image or running time (to get the most complete or, contrarily, the most efficient clip) or simply the rules of peer-review popularity (users give clips star ratings, and the number of times each clip has been viewed is also tracked for users' ready reference). Beyond its ease of use, however, its vast collection seems to be the primary draw.

YouTube has contributed to a culture of the clip. The specific moments a viewer wants to see can now be searched and accessed without the hassles of watching live broadcasts, making recordings, or waiting through exposition and commercial breaks. In the process, it fosters a new temporality of immediate gratification for audiences. As soon as the red bar across the bottom of the playback frame indicates how much of the streaming video is ready to view, users can actually drag the cursor to scan ahead to arrive at the moment they seek even quicker. Suddenly, three minutes can seem like a life-sucking eternity, and I, for one, am prone to skipping ahead or moving on before a clip finishes if it is the least bit tedious.

Although I am making a claim for the site's centrality in accessing historical clips, instantaneity is one of its primary virtues. Users post television clips almost as soon at they have been broadcast, which allows viewers who missed a politician's faux pas or bits of incisive satire to see the relevant material in time to participate in water-cooler conversations. Of course, rights owners can and do insist that such popular clips be taken down almost as quickly. It has become fairly common for blog readers to click through an embedded clip from

The YouTube interface: playback controls, user comments, related and featured clips



Viacom-owned CBS hosts a branded "channel" on YouTube

the previous night's television broadcast, only to find that the footage has been taken off-line in the few hours that elapsed between the post and the reader's attempted playback. This has become so common that bloggers even signal the likelihood of this outcome, by suggesting readers click through while they can. Even newsworthy public events are not immune. Perhaps the most publicized and outrageous single take-down to date came when public affairs network C-SPAN ordered the removal of Stephen Colbert's tongue-in-cheek speech at the White House Correspondents' Dinner in May 2006, which had been watched 2.7 million times within forty-eight hours on YouTube and which clearly satirized the state of political journalism.[5] This viewership statistic suggests that more viewers saw the speech on YouTube than during its original transmission, and that, as outrageous as it seems, even official governmental events can be subject to restrictive copyright claims. On the flip side, the site has also been used

as a vehicle for grassroots alternative media to expose political gaffes, corporate exploitation, police violence, or the realities of the battlefront in Iraq. Once publicized on YouTube, these events and issues at times get taken up in the mainstream press. In many cases, this feeds the greater good, though at other times a few seconds of video can cause such a scandal that they may ruin a campaign or damage an entire political career. And, rather than diversifying what audiences see, topical viral videos (viral in the sense of epidemic) reinforce the cultural dominance of specific media clips.

The high viewership of short-lived clips—such as those mentioned in blogs or even reported in the traditional press—reintroduce the dialectic of ubiquity and ephemerality that has, historically, been the model of much of popular culture, especially broadcasting. The intervention of home video recording opened up the possibility for home audiences to catch up on live broadcasts that they may have missed or of vintage moments they wish to re-experience. Videotape induced audience expectations for access—whether for home video releases of theatrical feature films approximately six months after their debuts or for film classics, video art, or television shows that someone, somewhere must have recorded. The Internet, Google, and YouTube have accelerated and exaggerated these expectations for availability. But YouTube reminds audiences that such content, once in their grasp, can still be temporary. The initial novelty and glee at finding an unexpected clip soon gives way to frustration and disbelief when searches for something else come up matchless—or, increasingly, when a desired clip has been de-activated for copyright violation. Perhaps more than at any time before, audiences and users seem to reject the content industry's proprietary claims, complaining when a video goes offline or even reposting new versions of formerly disabled clips. Expectations for access have developed into a sense of access entitlement.

Despite many unrealized promises for digital media in the past decade or so, a surprising number of digital technology advocates and scholars remain celebratory in their rhetoric that technology has profoundly changed our culture, and continue to claim that in the near future all content will be digital, interactive, and shared. As a reporter for *Wired* magazine asserted, "Without being overly simplistic or melodramatic, the state of the Old Commercial Broadcasting Model can be summarized like this: a spiraling vortex of ruin."[6] I am far more skeptical. For mass audiences, broadcast, cable, and satellite television still dominate (not least because of class issues such as the digital divide—that is, uneven access to technology—or even the bourgeois pleasures of narrative structures and slick production values), and network content will continue to feed these streams. And I suspect that for many audiences, network content—new or old—still drives users to YouTube, and amateur content is discovered along the way, through the suggested links, alternate search results, or forwarded emails.

Although some cultural critics have predicted that YouTube will displace the established corporate media, YouTube's popularity relies at least in part upon recirculated selections of mainstream media.[7] As has been historically apparent with entertainment technologies, initial novelty often gives way to familiar content. Convergence usually means content redundancy across platforms, and YouTube perhaps relies more on mainstream media for source material than it threatens to displace it.[8] Given this situation, the conflict becomes not only about what media audiences watch, but who can control and profit from it.

CULTURAL MEMORY

YouTube has given renewed public lives to thousands or even millions of now-"classic" moments from television, and offers access to a rich spectrum of important footage of history-shaping events and of otherwise unavailable or obscure nuggets of popular culture. Available clips range from CNN coverage of the *Challenger* space shuttle explosion (1986) to footage of Los Angeles police beating Rodney King (1991), from the Disney-animated *The Story of Menstruation* (1946) to Crispin Glover playing up his eccentricities on *Late Night with David Letterman* (1987). In cases such as commercials and talk-show highlights, significant but small-scale ephemera has historically been the hardest content for fans or even historians to track down and re-experience. This Internet library has fed scholarly as well as nostalgic uses.

Culled from users' personal collections of recordings and productions, the site's videos and its search engine offer some evidence of what from television's past now constitutes our cultural memory—a concept that suggests the idiosyncratic ways that personal experience, popular culture, and historical narratives intersect. So much of our personal and social memories are comprised of televised news coverage, commercials, or scenes in bad sit-coms. YouTube allows users to seek out the media texts that have shaped them and that would otherwise be forgotten in "objective" histories. Like memory (cultural or personal), YouTube is dynamic. It is an ever-changing clutter of stuff from the user's past, some of which disappears and some of which remains overlooked, while new material is constantly being accrued and new associations or (literally, hypertext) links are being made. The images are often hazy but may suffice to induce recall or to fill in where *continued on page 54*

THE CLIP CANON

In the main article, I have focused on old content that has become newly accessible through YouTube and on the intellectual property issues that video-posting and sharing raise. With millions of different clips posted to the site, it would be impossible to offer a comprehensive analysis of its content. Yet, among all the amateur music videos, fan tributes, talking heads, pet vids, laughing babies, stunts, and TV shows, a minority of clips have been seen and shared millions of times. In the culture of the clip, spectacles, stunts, cuteness, pop culture references, and exhibitionism all trump narrative. Here, then, is a capsule survey of some of the most viewed and most talked-about clips from YouTube's first couple of years—twelve candidates for the YouTube canon.

"Evolution of Dance"

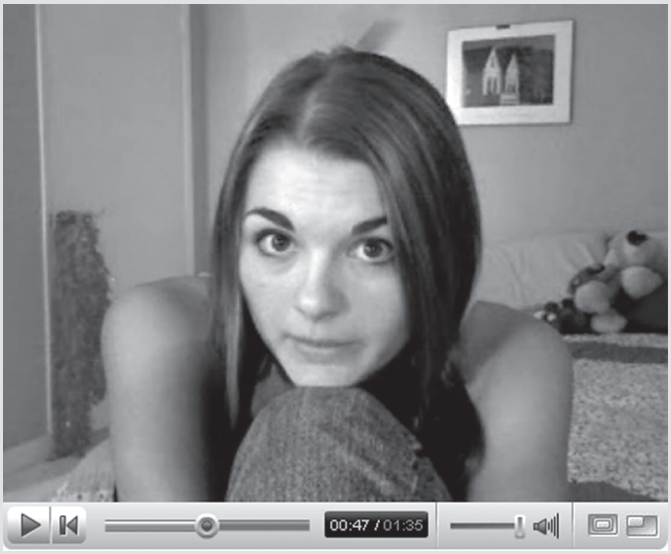
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMH0bHeiRNg
Category: most viewed
Copyright status: appropriative (clearing music rights would be both logistically challenging and costly)

With the most viewed clip in YouTube history, "Inspirational Comedian" Judson Laipply performs iconic dance moves to a frenetic megamix of thirty songs in six minutes. This clip would seem an unlikely hit: the amateurish footage presents a long take of a balding white guy performing in a glaring spotlight with the acoustics of home video shot in an auditorium. Yet, Laipply cleverly and nimbly switches between dance styles. Most of the songs are instantly recognizable, and the crowd cheers every transition as he moves from Elvis's knee flares to disco, head-banging, the chicken dance, and the Macarena. My personal favorite: the MC Hammer-style sideways shuffle.

lonelygirl15

http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=lonelygirl15
Category: most notorious
Copyright status: original

One of the most popular video bloggers and arguably the first YouTube star was lonelygirl15, a teenager named Bree. In her postings, she talked about her ambiguously romantic relationship with her best friend, cryptically referenced her religion, attempted to "prove science wrong," and responded to viewer comments. The short episodes began in mid-June 2006. In September lonelygirl15 was exposed as a fictional "soap opera" created by three aspiring screenwriters and an actress. The hoax called into question the authenticity of video blogs generally.



OK Go, "Here I Go Again"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pv5zWaTEVkI
Category: music video
Copyright status: original (posted by record label)

This hipster pop group has staked its fame on ironic synchronized dance routines in videos that have gone viral. In "Here I Go Again," the four band members glide, hop, and turn in sync on a treacherous course of treadmills. The band members perform the number as if it were an elaborate joke—which, of course, it would be if the scene wasn't so well choreographed and rehearsed.

"Dick in a Box"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dmVU08zVpA
Category: network content
Copyright status: original (posted by network)

The *Saturday Night Live* digital short "Lazy Sunday" became one of the most popular early postings on YouTube—and was the first high-profile clip to be removed at the request of its rights owner. A year later, this *SNL* short became another YouTube favorite, but this time NBC posted the clip—in its un-bleeped, non-broadcast version. In the music video parody sketch "Dick," Andy Samberg and host Justin

Timberlake, dressed and sounding like white boy throwbacks to early-1990s sexed-up R&B ballads, sing about giving their girlfriends "something real" for Christmas.

Two Chinese boys

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1LZVmn3p3o
Category: lip-synch
Copyright status: appropriative

Lip-synch videos, featuring teenagers giving exaggerated performances to their webcams, rank among the most pervasive genres on YouTube. To be frank, the appeal of these karaoke videos is pretty much lost on me, but their sheer prevalence and apparent popularity make them one of the central genres of the forum. Cross-cultural interpretations, such as these two Chinese students mugging to the Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way" are especially popular. See also: the "Numa Numa" post and its copycats.

Nora, the piano-playing cat

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ860P4iTaM
Category: cute animals
Copyright status: original (possible underlying rights for music played in background)

Home videos of pets rank among the most popular amateur videos on YouTube, especially clips of cats leaping, screeching, or falling down. But probably the most famous single cat is Nora, a feline that purportedly plays piano. Nora sits at the bench and paws one note at a time with apparent concentration, but don't expect any actual melodic progressions. Nora's celebrity was so newsworthy that a sequel clip premiered on CNN.

"Brokeback to the Future"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uwuLxrv8jY
Category: fan video/trailer slash
Copyright status: appropriative

Trailer re-mixes have become one of the most popular forms of fan subversion in the age of digital video. Amidst the hype surrounding *Brokeback Mountain*'s release, a flood of clips reworked homosocial male buddy films to expose their homoerotic subtexts. Faithfully mimicking the structure of the official *Brokeback* trailer and using its signature score, the best of these slash clips revisits the *Back to the Future* trilogy. Also check out the seminal parody reinvention of Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* as a light-hearted family comedy.

Hillary Clinton/"1984" parody

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h3G-lMZxjo
Category: political campaign/culturejamming
Copyright status: appropriative

The first controversial attack ad of the 2008 U.S. presidential election was an instant culturejamming classic. The creator reworked Apple's famous Ridley Scott-directed "1984" advertisement announcing the Macintosh with video clips of candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton as Big Brother. Clever and technically sophisticated, this unauthorized spot plugged Barack Obama, who in turn refused to condemn it. The original Mac ad can also easily be found on YouTube for comparison—or for a quick tutorial in advertising and computer history.

Mentos and Diet Coke experiments

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkkOUPYNs7I
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKoB0MHVBvM
Category: stunts
Copyright status: original (though trademark owners Diet Coke and Mentos may not be happy)

Mix half-chewed Mentos candies with a large bottle of Diet Coke, and the reaction produces a foamy eruption. YouTube hosts numerous variations on this chemistry experiment-turned-stunt. These are my two favorites. In the first, a guy throws a Diet Coke bottle rocket down against the pavement, and it ricochets clear past the roof of a two-story house. The second, more elaborate clip features two men in lab coats and goggles who unleash 101 bottles in sequence to create a fizzy fountain that unfolds in geyser-tastic spectacle.

Parkour

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUksaD-JJgI
Category: sports/stunts
Copyright status: original (may have underlying music rights to clear)

The numerous videos about Parkour, a French sport of high-speed, daredevil urban acrobatics, suggest that YouTube can introduce audiences to previously obscure athletic forms. Parkour was the *raison d être* for the hit French flick *District B-13* and made a cameo in *Casino Royale*. But video clips such as this British one take the action back to the streets, with stunning and often dangerous stunts that mix gymnastics, breakdancing, and martial arts, as young men run, jump, and flip. Also on the sports beat, for instant (or incessant) replays, check out Zinedine Zidane's controversial head-butt during the 2006 World Cup.

"Noah takes a photo of himself every day for 6 years"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6B26asyGKDo
Category: self-documentation
Copyright status: original

Blogs, MySpace, cameraphones, and other digital technologies have introduced proliferating modes of autobiography. 2356 days in the making, Noah Kalina shot self-portraits daily between 2000 and 2006, then put them together as an animated slide show. The framing and facial expressions remain remarkably consistent throughout, and the Philip Glass-esque piano score (credited as original music by Carly Comando) accentuate the repetition of the video's structure and its melancholy mood. Unlike many self-indulgent clips that reflect an exacerbated culture of narcissism, this is an arresting and almost moving study of maturing.

Saddam Hussein execution

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tVG5_F5Ado
Category: snuff/current events
Copyright status: unclear

YouTube isn't all crazy cats and teenage goofs. It also appeals to morbid and prurient interest, as the popularity of copies of a cameraphone recording of Hussein's hanging demonstrate.

continued from page 50 we could only previously imagine how things were from written or word-of-mouth accounts. One of the dangers of seeing once-formative content on YouTube is being underwhelmed in the present; such disillusioning effects are probably only enhanced by the low resolution of the video stream. But these disappointments of history alternate with delightful discoveries.

YouTube introduces a new model of media access and amateur historiography that, while the images are imperfect and the links are impermanent, nonetheless realizes much of the Internet's potential to circulate rare, ephemeral, and elusive texts. As documents, the low-resolution postings to YouTube fall far short of archival preservation, and excerpting changes the flow and format of broad/cable-cast content. Archivists and librarians have criticized the site not only for circulating low-resolution copies of unauthorized content but also for skewing general perceptions that sites such as YouTube may render traditional archives irrelevant and introduce unrealistic demands for access.

YouTube functions both as a portal of cultural memory and as a concept, but it does not operate as an archive in the proper sense of the word. Perceptions of its popularity have had a snowball effect on YouTube's prevalence for both uploads and streaming, thus making it the de facto repository for video clips—at least until they are deactivated. YouTube is only the most famous of a proliferation of web video sites, but as the best-known, it has become a centralized repository and probably the first place users search for content. It has not only become the default site, but it is also becoming the generic term for conversational references to web video clips and sharing—much the way Barbie, Xerox, Kleenex, or Coke can be used to describe a type of product beyond a specific brand name.

Memory media are mediated—and look it, as old video clips seem to exhibit a surface haze of worn old video. Streaming clips on YouTube reflect the aesthetics of access; reduced resolution becomes a trade-off for quick and easy use—an issue that has recurred across various technologies, from photocopies to VHS tapes to MP3s. In a word, YouTube clips look and sound terrible. Off-air recordings get compressed, and source webcams and camera-phone images look blocky and jerky from the moment of creation; delays in streaming exacerbate the effects of both. Videos that may look acceptable in miniature reveal low resolution if blown up to full-screen. And digitization of analog source recordings take color saturation down a few notches while introducing pixelation. The YouTube recordings further remediate content and inscribe its sources onto the recordings. The homemade status of many television clips is marked by station identification logos in the corner of the frame and, in the cases of older recordings, VHS artifacts such as rainbows of discoloration and signal drop-out. Such artifacts and alterations indexically signal the videos' sources and demonstrate bootleg aesthetics.[9] Clips that circulate beyond YouTube, as embedded videos on other websites, feature branded YouTube watermarks. The identities of uploaders and comment posters are also inscribed on the interface, so that there is some record of where the footage came from and where it has gone.

If YouTube can be said to facilitate communication, it is in ways that emphasize video over epistolary exchange. Friends, family, and co-workers can easily email hotlinks for already-posted videos of cute critters or comical blasts from the past to each other, and typically do so with minimal if any written explanations; forwarding YouTube videos can sustain email contact between people with pre-established relationships without the effort of writing personal narratives. In terms of forging new connections, two prevalent types of user-generated posts have emerged: first, talking-head webcam videos of users spouting off extemporaneous rants in response to the clips they watch and, second, more elaborate parodies of popular videos. Despite designated spaces on the YouTube interface for descriptions about videos and for feedback from viewers, the potential for written communication via the site seems to be mostly unrealized. Browsing the posted user comments reveals a lot of plugs for posters' own clips, spam, chain letters, and racist or homophobic flames (insults). When users do make comments, they are typically brief and not terribly enlightening, along the lines of, "lol. very funny!!!!!!" Written dialogue remains the domain of blogs and chat rooms.

As a forum for self-syndication and post-broadcast networking, YouTube has elicited considerable discourses of "community" and "sharing." Co-founder Chad Hurley has commented, "People like to share experiences . . . We started it with the idea of solving a problem—how to share video online with your friends."[10] A market analyst was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "'YouTube figured out what Google and Yahoo and Microsoft and all the others in the marketplace didn't,' she said. 'It's not about the video. It's about creating a community around the video.'"[11] As its slogan "Broadcast Yourself" suggests, YouTube fosters exhibitionistic and narcissistic amateur video streams; it is tempting to suggest that user-generated content on YouTube is more about promoting oneself than about exchanging ideas with others. Clips that excerpt or rework texts from TV's past, in contrast, indicate a desire to reclaim a shared cultural memory. And, of course, these are the clips most at risk of being taken off-line by their rights owners.

COPYRIGHT

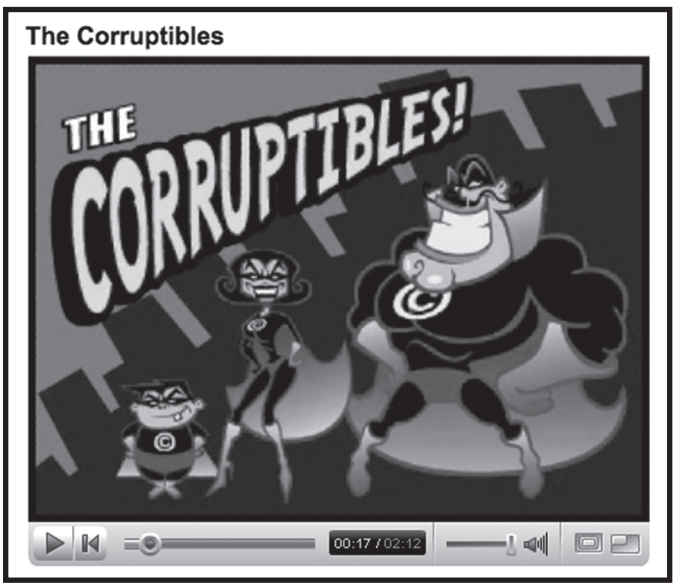
Copyright has been at the center of public attention to YouTube, and it sets the terms on which much of personal (and scholarly) access to media texts will be available. It is also the major question that has overshadowed YouTube's success. How long will YouTube survive in an age of aggressive anti-piracy campaigns and lawsuits—content industry movements that have largely been supported by Congress and the courts? Google purchased YouTube for $1.6 billion in October 2006, making it *worth* suing.[12] Videos may easily be found through keyword searches on the site or simply through a general web search on Google. In this sense, its design as a search engine matched Google's business model and allowed for integration with Google's own fledgling video databases when the company acquired YouTube.

With all the attention YouTube has received as the central portal of web video clips, it had seemed inevitable that some media conglomerate or other would sue YouTube for copyright infringement. If anything, it actually took longer than one might have expected. In March 2007, Viacom sued YouTube and Google for $1 billion.[13] The lawsuit followed Viacom's failed attempts to negotiate a cooperative deal (negotiations reportedly continue concurrent with litigation) and hundreds of thousands of requests for YouTube to disable clips of Viacom properties *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, and *South Park*. Advocates of digital content sharing and remixing have pointed out the irony that Stephen Colbert repeatedly referenced and encouraged YouTube clips and remixes on his show. Whether or not Viacom sees some financial reward for its litigation, this is the type of case that seems bound for the Supreme Court, to follow in the wake of its major precedents: *Sony v. Universal* (1984, known colloquially as "the Betamax case") and *MGM v. Grokster* (2005, which shut down Kazaa-like p2p network Grokster for enabling unauthorized music sharing).

Copyright law was developed to stimulate publication of new works for the edification of culture. At base, copyright allows rights owners the right of publication and, in exchange for offering cultural works for public consumption, of profiting from such publication. This form of legal regulation was intended to foster a vibrant and continuing stream of new cultural works, though legislation and court rulings have increasingly favored rights owners over their audiences of late. Numerous copyright scholars have suggested that such shifts have betrayed the law's original purpose. For analog media, content owners not only financially benefit from publication, but they also have considerable control in deciding how content will enter the marketplace.

The same basic issues are at stake, if complicated, in the era of digital networks when peer-sharing and video streaming are more or less indistinguishable from publication. In many cases, rights owners request to have streaming YouTube videos disabled not necessarily because they are competing with owners' own residual marketing but because they want to maintain some kind of control over what is publicly accessible and how it is distributed. Digital technologies and policies have facilitated rapid and more drastic methods of disabling the documents that feed cultural memories and enable scholarship. Hardware is now regularly engineered to prevent copying and to disable unauthorized uses, and the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) forbids hacking encryption technologies and allows for offended parties to demand that online content be taken off-line without due process to prove infringement. As Lawrence Lessig has suggested, in such situations the layers of "code"—the hardware, the software, and the content—are typically all owned or controlled by corporations with vested interests in regulating them.[14]

Although it should perhaps go without saying, copyright should concern anyone interested in film and media because it has long been the primary legal means of regulating access to texts. When access is restricted or forbidden, not only do viewers lose out, but textual scholars can be severely inhibited as well when key texts simply are not available to be studied or taught. I would go so far as to suggest that YouTube has had a major impact on how television history can be taught by opening up access to a wealth of clips that



The Electronic Frontier Foundation's parody of *The Incredibles*: a warning about restrictive copyright laws

professors may have longed for but been unable to locate; the site is incredibly useful for reference, just as the Internet Movie Database and Wikipedia—despite (overblown) criticisms of their accuracy—conveniently fill in such information as credits, dates, and historical events. Furthermore, students can make curriculum peer-produced by forwarding relevant links to their instructors and classmates.

To be clear, I am suggesting that YouTube does not promote willy-nilly piracy but rather enables access to culturally significant texts that would otherwise be elusive and the ability to repurpose videos in the creation of new derivative works. In other words, the site and its users (and I) advocate for what copyright is supposed to do. Furthermore, litigation—whether based upon a legitimate legal claim or merely a scare tactic and form of economic intimidation—can have inhibiting effects far more sweeping than the specific rule of law. Copyright matters, and YouTube has become one of the most prominent and popular sites where what's actually legal law is being contested and potentially curtailed.

In terms of copyright, the user-uploaded content streamed via YouTube falls into roughly three categories: copied, appropriative, and original. The copied texts derive primarily from users' television recordings, clipped into bite-sized portions without intended alteration of the source material other than excerpting. This is perhaps the most sought-after category, especially for catching up with topical TV moments or nostalgic clips. Appropriated clips often include copyrighted music or footage used in the service of new derivative works; such uses range from amateur music videos as users dance and lip-synch to popular songs in their bedrooms, to complex fan, slash or culturejamming re-edits of footage. Original content would mean any video footage that does not incorporate previously copyrighted works, such as home movies, video diaries, and small-scale productions. There are also innumerable versions, imitations, and parodies of both corporate and amateur content. All three categories are prevalent, including original content, which helps bolster the claim that the site can and is used for substantial non-infringing uses. In many cases, what appears to be the same clip has been uploaded by different users, thus blurring distinctions between authorship, ownership, and distribution rights.

In the wake of court rulings against the p2ps Napster and Grokster, the copyright crisis has haunted otherwise celebratory predictions of the website. In the Betamax case, which legalized home recording with VCRs, the Supreme Court came to three significant conclusions: first, that home video recorders must be allowed because of their potential for non-infringing uses; second, that the dominant uses of the machines were for timeshifting (recording television programs off air for belated viewing), which the Supreme Court considered fair use; and third, that Sony could not be held liable for its customers' misuses of the machines. The court saw fit to expand the definition of fair use—reproduction of copyrighted content for educational uses—to include personal consumptive uses as a way to broaden the potential audiences for television programming and serve a broader public interest. This ruling expanded the domain of fair use beyond orthodox interpretations, thus setting a curious but progressive precedent. The judges were clearly aware that some home tapers did, in fact, elide or fast-forward through commercials when timeshifting, and that some video collectors built home libraries of tapes. But for the court, the legitimate and potentially beneficial uses of the technology outweighed such violations.

Although YouTube may superficially resemble the peer-to-peer networks as a means of unauthorized content redistribution, I suggest that all of the judicial reasons that ultimately protected VCRs can and should reasonably apply to YouTube. YouTube cannot be completely shut down due to the indisputable volume of material that in no way infringes copyright and that can be argued to reflect the experiences and ideas of a generation and possibly even a whole cultural moment. The content industry's interests in the site may suffice to maintain its architecture—and, by extension, to sustain a space for amateur and bootleg media flows. Even if YouTube itself implodes, the technology for video sharing remains available, and viewer desire seems sufficient to drive video sharing to alternative venues.

The failure of the Betamax precedent to save the p2ps should not be seen to limit its viability for YouTube. Judicial perceptions that Napster and Grokster did not have significant non-infringing uses and that the network managers could have intervened to disable infringing content were central to their undoing. Distinguishing YouTube from these peer-to-peer networks, users do not download the video files to their own computers but instead watch them as streaming Flash files and only redistribute them as emailed or embedded links. When the copyright question arises, YouTube representatives have cited the DMCA's safe harbor provision for Internet service providers, which shields companies that provide technical infrastructure from liability for users' infringements.

Further distinguishing YouTube from these peer-to-peer networks, YouTube regulates uses of the site. At the time of the Google purchase, YouTube was portrayed as a "good corporate citizen," one that may actually serve the content industry's interests.[15] YouTube has demonstrated such self-

regulations as disabling clips that have been the subject of take-down requests from copyright owners in compliance with the DMCA or that have been deemed obscene by users. The site's inability—or refusal, depending on one's point of view—to stringently and preemptively monitor copyright content has lead to criticism that it willingly hosts infringing content to boost its bottom line. Meanwhile, YouTube's relatively stringent policies have spawned a proliferation of knock-off sites that use similar technologies and interfaces to provide access to such illicit content. This trend reflects a pre-existing pattern: the rise of alternative peer-to-peer services when popular ones face legal trouble. In fact, killing off YouTube may do more damage to the content industry than good, if doing so eliminates the industry-friendly site.

In contrast to Viacom, some record labels, studios, and networks use YouTube as a promotional platform by uploading previews and pilots through branded "channels" or through paid placement on the website's front page.[16] A handful, including Viacom-owned CBS, have even struck licensing or small-stake ownership agreements with the site. For a time, it seemed that industry licensing agreements and the Google purchase might have signaled a decisive shift in the content industry's war against so-called "piracy" and ensured the site's survival. YouTube has popularized online video viewing generally and very likely driven traffic to other sites, including the networks' own. Such mainstreaming of consumption patterns and collaboration with the entertainment industry invariably entails some compromises, but YouTube might have been part of achieving an access equilibrium—and maybe it still will be. Maybe the site has introduced a new paradigm for online digital video sharing that builds upon the Betamax decision's protections in a way that can be reconciled with the DMCA, but to negotiate these seemingly opposed policies, it must do so in ways as complex, even imaginative, as both the Betamax landmark decision and the digital copyright laws. If YouTube and online video streaming continue to be embraced by the industry, a court ruling may find a way within copyright to ensure the site's survival as a way to protect commerce—just as it did for VCRs.

In a technological, legal, and business sphere that has so far undone most utopian predictions about new media, my initial optimism about YouTube has given way to ambivalence. The site may not be a perfect or perpetual way to preserve content, but it has incredibly expanded access to media content. Ultimately a commercial endeavor, the site is not—and probably never has been—inherently utopian or radical. Whatever YouTube's future, its meteoric rise to popularity and its role at the center of speculation about the near future of video technology make it historically significant. It should also alert media scholars and audiences to the ways that copyright can regulate video access and, by extension, erase media memory.

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ABSTRACT At the forefront of online streaming video, YouTube has expanded access to a rich spectrum of televisual material and suggests the potential for democratization of media memories and flows. Yet, the site also introduces new ways to regulate and deny access to such content under the guise of enforcing copyright.

KEYWORDS YouTube, streaming video, copyright, piracy, cultural memory

FROM PHOTOREALISM TO CANDY COLORS

Sony was recently forced to apologize to the Church of England for the "virtual desecration" of Manchester Cathedral in its highly successful Playstation 3 (PS3) game *Resistance: Fall of Man* (2006). One of the game's bloody gun battles is set inside an exact 3D rendering of the building, but Sony was forced to mount the defense that the game is mere fantasy. This did not sit easily with the fact that the PS3 was trumpeted on its launch last year for the cinema-style photorealism of its games.

The Nintendo Wii console, by contrast, has an aesthetic dominated by cute, candy-colored, and cartoonish visuals. It also has an innovative motion-sensitive controller, which allows players to direct on-screen movements with pronounced physical movements, such as swinging the controller through the air to play a tennis game, rather than by memorizing complex combinations of joystick movements and buttons that bear no gestural relation to actions performed on screen. Cheaper than the PS3, the Wii sets out to attract casual players, lapsed gamers, and non-gamers with charming graphics and easily grasped game-play.

Resistance's apocalyptic alternate-history premise is that war with the Nazis never happened. Instead contagious aliens overran 1950s Europe. *Resistance* exemplifies the grim atmosphere and blood-soaked combat action of the first-person shooter genre. The washed-out sepia tones, ravaged environments, and bleak, "war is hell" atmosphere call to mind World War II films such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006) that seek to engulf viewers in the desperation and chaos of warfare.

The shoot-'em-up gameplay is framed by documentary-style cut scenes and death scenes designed to lend a veneer of historical authenticity to the main action. In between levels, a somber voice narrates the progress of the war as computer animation recreates the "Ken Burns effect," panning and zooming over shots of black-and-white photographs, maps, and other ersatz historical documents that appear scarred and faded by time. When you are killed in action, the game cuts to a brief replay in the style of "historical footage"—the scene is re-rendered as flickering, overexposed, and dust-flecked black-and-white film, as if the moment had long ago been recorded on celluloid that has slowly degraded ever since. The game uses a representation of the material *imperfections* of celluloid in order to confer authenticity on the game animation.

Resistance could not be more distant from the astro-bright, cheerful, pop-up-book visuals and clever self-awareness of *Super Paper Mario* (2007), one of the most popular Wii games. Recalling self-referential cartoon series like Max Fleischer's *Out of the Inkwell*, *Super Paper Mario* plays with representational conventions of depth and three-dimensional space, calling attention to the arbitrary borders of its artificial world. Unlike first-person shooters that transport the gamer into an infinitely expansive environment, *Super Paper Mario*'s landscapes abruptly end when you scroll to the right and left edge, making it

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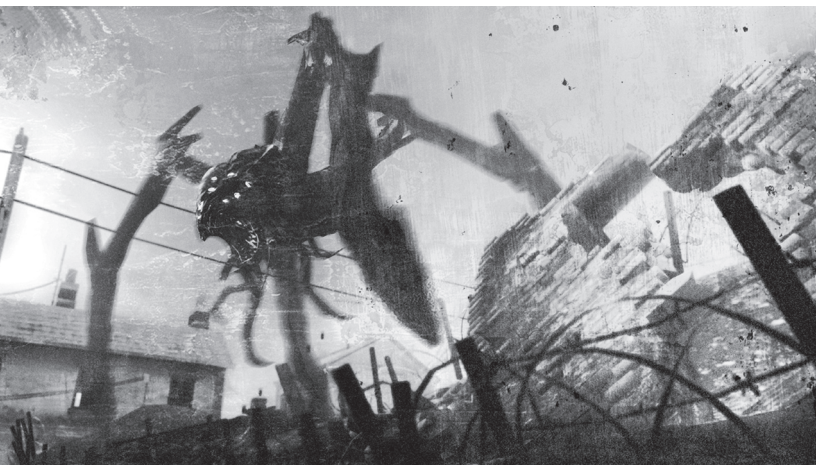


Resistance: Fall of Man: "historical document" of alien attack (left), and the realistic first-person perspective on the battle zone. © 2006 Insomniac Games

clear that the limits of the screen also mark the limits of the game world.

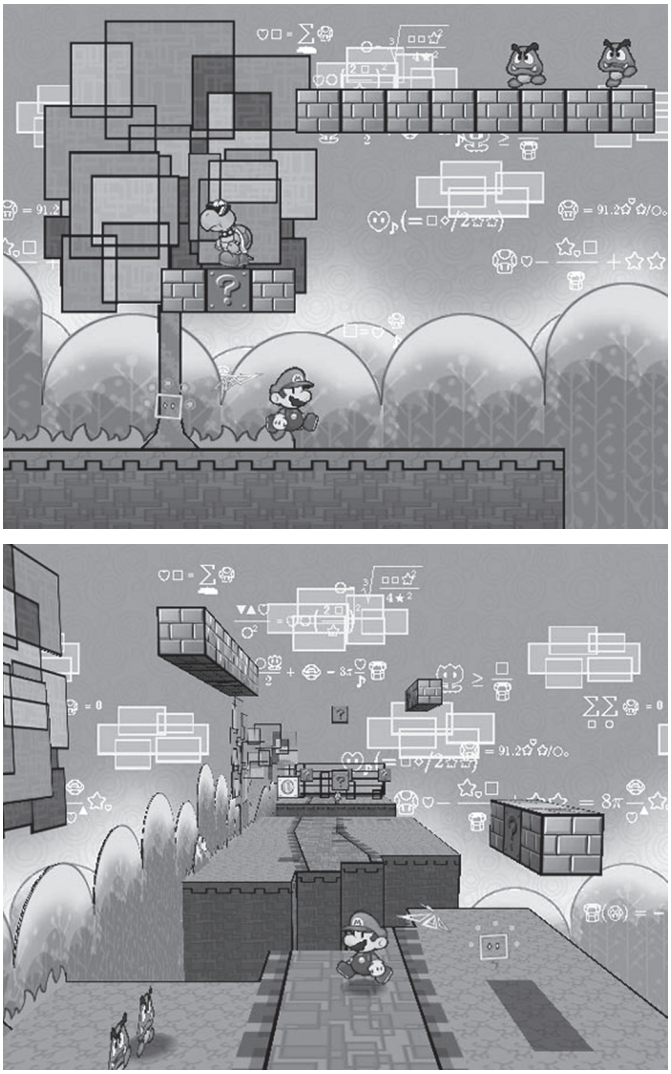
The game also requires players to flip between 2D and 3D versions of the game in order to progress. The wall that seems impenetrable or the monster that seems overwhelmingly huge in 2D do not necessarily carry weight in the 3D world. Raised platforms that seem solid beneath your feet in 2D become wire-thin in 3D, causing you to tumble to the ground. Shifting between dimensions shows objects and creatures in the environment puffing up and flattening out unexpectedly, upsetting any stable spatial relationship between you and others, figure and ground.

Resistance and most other PS3 titles aim for the three-dimensionality of live-action cinema. Space is uniformly ordered through first-person linear perspective, unfolding before you as a vast, continuous field. The game's physics engine carefully simulates real-world physical laws, particularly as they apply to the behavior of weapons fire—sprays of shrapnel leave differently shaped dents on walls and alien armor depending on the force of impact. The environment forms an internally coherent given for players to penetrate. In *Super Paper Mario*, the transformation of space between dimensions *is* the action. Space is not static ground on which figures move or where actions occur, but something that forms and re-forms as you flip between 2D and 3D perspectives.

Super Paper Mario incorporates the screen aesthetics we encounter in our daily use of computers—the accumulation of windows layered on top of each other as we shuffle between browser windows, media players, instant messaging, or office applications with graphics of varying quality—and turns these into a form of play. Line-drawn animations that resemble Etch-a-Sketch doodles and blocky, 8-bit graphics lifted from classic games intermingle with high-resolution 3D animation. Selection boxes expand over sections of the game screen that are then "cut" and "pasted" elsewhere to transition Mario from one world to the next.

By calling attention to our screen interfaces, *Super Paper Mario* discloses the dimensional strangeness of the way that we interact with digital-image screens as if they were simultaneously windows and sheets of paper, both deep and depthless. We experience the proliferating screens of our computers, cell phones, iPods, and televisions as portholes into a three-dimensional world beyond, as when we watch a movie on DVD, *and* as flat surfaces, as when we type on a word-processor page or click through an online photo album.

The success of the Wii is a reminder that photorealistic exploration-and-combat is only one kind of gaming. Wii games, especially those that make most inventive use of the system's controller, adopt an alternative paradigm that requires different kinds of play and bodily engagement with the thick physical world we occupy away from the screen. The way Wii players situate their bodies between real-world space and on-screen game images is like the way they constantly flip between 2D and 3D in *Super Paper Mario*.



Flipping between 2D and 3D in *Super Paper Mario*.

© 2007 Nintendo/Intelligent Systems

A theoretical question is always implicit. How can we be simultaneously here, waving a controller at the television in a room with friends (for Wii games are often designed to be played in a group), *and* there, on screen, hitting a baseball into the distant horizon? *Super Paper Mario* points up the optical illusion of the photorealist paradigm in gaming and makes us delight in its constant undoing and reconstruction. Our relationship to computer screens may often be one we take for granted. *Super Paper Mario* requires us to remain curious about the paradoxes of immersion in digital space.

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THE ONLINE STUMP

"Democratic government is the original user-generated content"—a simple, pithy message spoken directly into the camera with clarity and conviction. James Kotecki knows what makes good YouTube; indeed, he has a claim to being the site's single most astute user when it comes to political communication through online moving-image content. His assessment of the potential of new media to reconfigure the relationship between politicians and voters is insightful and articulate: "it moves from a one-way conversation broadcast from the top down to a multidirectional face-to-face conversation where everyone can participate and anyone can observe." The arguably naive optimism of this statement is balanced elsewhere by a canny awareness of both how public figures can exploit the particular qualities of YouTube, and the new accountability to which the universal presence of video cameras now subjects them.

Given his ostensible shrewdness, competence, and ease with publicity (he has been featured on CNN, Al Jazeera and network news, and in the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Economist*), what's most surprising about James Kotecki is not his age—he was born in October 1985 and graduated this summer from Georgetown—but the almost complete absence of any discernible political stance from the hundred-odd videos posted on his YouTube channel, EmergencyCheese, since the beginning of 2007. While he might be the web's biggest cheerleader for online video as a fillip to democratic engagement ("for me it's getting people to care about political issues in the first place"), Kotecki's own interest is avowedly analytical, centered on assessment of prospective presidential candidates' use of online video, his approval or disapproval determined by how accomplished he judges that usage to be. His approach, in other words, is journalistic rather than political per se. (In fact, YouTube's potential for cybergoguery is surprisingly little exploited, with personal manifestos generally restricted to conspiracy theories centered on 9/11 or the New World Order, or confrontational acts such as the purported promotion of free speech in Thailand through the provocative depiction of King Bhumibol as an ape.)

Kotecki can claim considerable success in incubating increased online engagement from politicians. He has solicited personalized video responses from candidates Dennis Kucinich, Mitt Romney, John Edwards, John McCain, and Tom Tancredo; fringe candidate Ron Paul even agreed to an interview in Kotecki's dorm room. Indeed, Paul's online constituency appears to be the most conspicuously active: despite finishing at or near the bottom of recent Republican voter polls, his YouTube channel, RonPaul2008dotcom, shows more than 20,000 subscribers—an order of magnitude above his nearest Republican rival (Mitt Romney, on 2409 as of 10 July 2007). It remains to be seen whether these numbers will be reflected at the primaries, but Paul—who also has a strong presence on Facebook and MySpace—is one of several fringe candidates embracing online video, with varying degrees of success. On the right, Tom Tancredo can be seen chatting casually about illegal immigration while driving his car. He has also posted a video appealing for YouTube users' own accounts of the impact of the same topic, saying "I know there's a human face here that we can put on this story and I'd like you to provide it for us." (He had received two responses at the time of writing, from users who habitually post to a variety of political sites.) Fred Thompson, meanwhile, put up his own response to a similar video in which Michael Moore, promoting his new film *Sicko*, asks users to give details of their experiences of the U.S. healthcare system—though Thompson's mannered approach, swiveling round in his chair to face the camera, cigar clamped in mouth, has the unsavory air of a Bond villain rather than a statesman.

The front-runners' experience of online video has tended to be inadvertent, embarrassing, or both: Rudolph Giuliani is reportedly unamused by the popularity of a clip of him in drag; John Edwards is shown fixing his hair accompanied by "I Feel Pretty"; Barack Obama is flatteringly trivialized in "'I Got a Crush. . .On Obama' By Obama Girl"; Hillary Clinton was targeted in the "Vote Different" video that cast her as Big Brother, and caught off-tune in "Hillary Clinton Sings National Anthem." There are signs of more savvy, proactive video use too: Edwards is using footage of his wife Elizabeth chastising conservative commentator Ann Coulter on the fundraising section of his website, while Clinton has posted dozens of videos and launched HillCam, a series of shorts from the campaign trail, including footage of Bill and Hillary at a Dairy Queen in Grinnell, Iowa. The pastiche of the final scene of *The Sopranos* featuring the couple that launched Hillary's

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campaign song, though wooden and not very funny, at least showed an awareness of YouTube sensibility.

Still, no candidate has yet demonstrated the innovative aptitude for Internet communication that Roosevelt showed for radio or Kennedy for television. Perhaps they remain too attuned to the one-to-many format of broadcast communication to develop the online potential for individualized dialogue—a digital version of the "old-fashioned one-on-one politics" for which Bill Clinton declares his affection in one of the HillCam videos. YouTube has tried to foster such connections by means of its CitizenTube channel, whose initiatives have included the somewhat cumbersome You Choose '08 Spotlight program, which invites candidates to invite users to submit responses to a question to which they will then respond, and a collaboration with CNN to select questions for a candidate debate from videos submitted by users. Questioners lining up for the Democratic Presidential Debate scheduled for 23 July in Charleston, South Carolina, include a Groucho Marx ventriloquist dummy asking about the lot of first-time buyers in the LA real estate market; an Illinois adolescent asking whether Hillary's wearing pink contradicts her earlier rejection of conservative female stereotypes; an Oregonian working in a Darfur refugee camp; and a twenty-year-old gay Indianan asking how the candidates would ensure his rights to full citizenship. The range of concerns raised demonstrates a broad political engagement among YouTube users, but the fact that "the CNN team will choose the most creative and compelling videos" to present to the candidates hardly makes it an advertisement for unmediated dialogue between candidates and voters.

In the U.K., meanwhile, Conservative leader David Cameron has attracted attention with a YouTube channel, Webcameron, which demonstrates the informality that makes for successful online video. Cameron's comfort with the camera is fully exploited. However, he might be unsettled by the fact that, of more than eighty videos uploaded to the channel, the most popular by a country mile features Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Boris Johnson—another politician whose knowing ease with public discourse is beyond question. (At one point he mentions "the kind of ludicrous health and safety bureaucracy that we are going to alleviate. How about that?" he adds, looking off-camera. "I was going to say 'exterminate' but I was told that's too vicious.") Cameron's erstwhile opponent, Tony Blair—the godfather of British media-savvy politics but famously tardy in embracing digital media—had only a sporadic flirtation with online video. On the official DowningSt YouTube channel he can be seen offering his post-election congratulations to Nicolas Sarkozy in French and enjoying an audience with the Queen in a video apparently aimed at those with minimal knowledge of the British constitution (Blair appears somewhat schoolboyish, HM scratches away at her leg). The channel also contains a considerable amount of interesting archive material, from BFI footage of Lloyd George at Chequers to a *Blue Peter* interview with Margaret Thatcher about Kampuchea. At the time of writing, the only videos featuring Prime Minister Gordon Brown showed him from afar in his first Cabinet and on visits to a school, hospital, and children's center. Those hoping that the channel might offer the means for a dialogue between the country's new leader and his electorate—a multidirectional face-to-face conversation—will be even more dismayed by the notice that accompanies each DowningSt posting: "Adding comments has been disabled for this video."

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"SICKO Movie—Michael Moore Wants to Hear From You"
"Rudy Giuliani in Drag Smooching Donald Trump"
"John Edwards Feeling Pretty"
"'I Got a Crush. . .On Obama' By Obama Girl"
"Vote Different"
"Hillary Clinton Sings National Anthem"
"hillcam: July 3, Grinnell"
"HillCam: July 3, Des Moines"
"Boris Johnson guest stars on the Webcameron Video Podcast"
"Tony Blair félicite Nicolas Sarkozy (en français)"
"The Queen and the Prime Minister"
"Lloyd George's first visit to Chequers (silent)"
"Margaret Thatcher: Blue Peter interview on Kampuchea"

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THE HUNGRY CINEMA OF STEPHEN DWOSKIN

The first striking impression created by the five-DVD set *Stephen Dwoskin* (Les Films du Renard, www.renardfilms.org) is the immense variety of modes and forms with which this director works—not only from film to film, but frequently within the same film. *Outside In* (1981), for instance, is nominally about the filmmaker's experience of his disability, stricken with polio in early childhood. But is it a personal reminiscence, a documentary, an essay film, a fictional recreation, a lyrical abstraction, or a dance/performance piece? It works through—as is often the case in Dwoskin's feature-length pieces—a series of self-contained tableaux, each one starkly set against those surrounding it, and each drawing upon a very different style of cinematic representation. Poetic associations flit from segment to segment, but it is left to the viewer to draw the lines and make the connections: the prosthetic apparatus into which Dwoskin laboriously straps his legs each morning is compared to both the everyday high heels with which women torture themselves, and the bondage-and-discipline gear that forms part of a sophisticated sexual "underworld" we see much of in his work.

More disconcertingly and provocatively, *Outside In* offers itself—via a wild prologue that mixes Jean-Luc Godard-style distancing with Benny Hill-style innuendo—as a comedy ("you might find it funny," he mock-politely advises). In a burlesque-grotesque combo that goes way beyond the self-abasement we find in Luc Moullet's similarly off-center comedies, Dwoskin puts himself into scenes where he falls, slips, slides, is helpless, while those around him flounder, compound the problem, or miraculously come to his aid (and such angelic gestures of care often carry an erotic dimension in his work). This overt self-depiction of Dwoskin's, which forms one strand of his career, is very different to the type of cinema for which he is best known—that is, if he is known at all, because he is surely among the most criminally overlooked major figures in cinema history. (Take a glance, for instance, at his woefully inadequate IMDB entry.)

Dwoskin, in fact, may be recognized more for what has been written about him—such as an influential 1976 *Afterimage* essay by Paul Willemen on the "fourth look" in cinema, theorized from a careful viewing of *Dyn Amo* (1972)—than for his own prodigious work. Dwoskin's career begins in the early-1960s Warhol Factory and continues unabated today, despite the near-death experience which is recorded, with typically paradoxical voluptuousness, in *Intoxicated by My Illness* (2001). Hailing from America but based mainly in Britain, Dwoskin, like those similarly magpie filmmakers whose paths he has crossed (Robert Kramer, Boris Lehman, Raúl Ruiz), has taken advantage of production opportunities all over Europe, bending all manner of commissions (collaborating with a dance company, documenting the work of photographer Bill Brandt, filling an experimental television slot for "hour-long single takes") to his own artistic will, gradually exchanging 16mm for digital video along the way. Indeed, the very fact that this DVD set is the initiative of a small collective of innovative filmmakers in Switzerland (Véronique Goël, Claudine Després, Julien Schmid, Cathy Day, and Zaqueu Guimareas) points to Dwoskin's fundamental "statelessness."

Willemen—like other prominent critics who, each from very different perspectives, have championed their friend Dwoskin, such as Raymond Durgnat and Laura Mulvey—was right to zero in on "the look" or gaze as constitutive of Dwoskin's cinema. What characterizes his work, above all, is the irrefutable, hypersensitive, always volatile presence of the filmmaker's camera-eye: searching, curious, hungry for all the world's surfaces, human or otherwise. There is nothing disembodied about this gaze: its height, its point in space, its formidable grappling with lens and focus, frequently returns us to Dwoskin's position in a bed, wheelchair, or on the floor. François Albera, in a fine essay provided with the set, compares Dwoskin's body with a camera tripod—a hulking, difficult-to-manage contraption—thus squaring this camera-eye with the cinematic apparatus itself. But there is something more to Dwoskin's camerawork, and it goes far beyond even the most elaborate theory of the voyeuristic-fetishistic gaze. In his most agonizingly poignant films, like *Dear Frances*, *Dad*, and *Lost Dreams* (all from 2003), Dwoskin's images register not "ocular possession" but loss, distance, the fundamental otherness of all the beings who flicker past his camera and through his life. This rich DVD selection of Dwoskin takes in several key paths of his *oeuvre*: the black-and-white pictorial experiments of *Take Me* (1968) and *Dirty* (1971); hypermodernist literary adaptations like *Tod und Teufel* (1973); rich collage films like the achingly autobiographical *Trying to Kiss the Moon* (1994); and hybrid documentary–fiction features

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Behindert **(left) and** ***Outside In.*** © 1974, 1981 Stephen Dwoskin

such as *Pain Is . . .* (1997). Two more volumes, drawing out still further tendencies in his career, are promised.

One film included in this set was nothing short of a revelation for me. *Behindert* (1974) is an astonishingly intimate recreation of Dwoskin's time with actor Carola Regnier (who gives a hypnotically intricate performance of her own desires and vulnerabilities). This is Dwoskin's masterpiece. Indeed, I have come to regard it as the one of the greatest works in cinema history. Once again, it is structured in tableaux, almost classically so—from first glance to final parting, it is like the "stations of the cross" of a modern relationship; and is it accidental that it comes only a year after Bergman's *Scenes from a Marriage*? Like many of Dwoskin's pieces, it is a reflection upon his physical condition—the title could be translated as "hindered" or even "handicapped," hence "disabled"—and the strains it poses on his exchanges with an able-bodied lover. But this is as far from a "social problem" or "disease of the week" telemovie as can possibly be imagined—as the perfectly judged long takes, coupled with the relentless drone-score by Gavin Bryars, attest.

Behindert remains Dwoskin's most daring and artistically successful attempt to splice his "first person" mode of cinema with a staged fiction—creating a kind of cubistic complexity from the constantly shuffled perspectives. The "fourth look" which Willemen intuited—not exactly the look of the characters, the spectator, or even the camera-eye, but some other, more forbidding look, like the gaze of society itself—hovers over the interstices between these images, these tableaux, these scenes from a relationship. From a film-history standpoint, Dwoskin's breakthrough here is prophetic. Anticipating the ongoing novelistic autobiography of Philippe Garrel's work since the 1980s, *Behindert* plays a thrilling, almost vampiric game with the proximity of real-life experience to its fictive recreation—especially as its principals are the actual former lovers!

It is easy to bemoan the lack of attention which Dwoskin's work has so far received within the institutions of international film culture—to wonder why he is not routinely put up alongside Brakhage, Snow, Frampton, Rainer, and all the rest in the long-established Mount Rushmore of avant-garde cinema. Dwoskin himself seems to view this DVD project in a different, altogether positive spirit, with nothing of what would be an understandable *ressentiment*. Perhaps (as he reflected in 1981) the conventional cinema arrangement of a mass audience before a screen in a darkened hall was never really well-suited to his work, which "aims to take the viewer one by one," in contradistinction to Hollywood which "aims to amalgamate the audience." The new era of one-by-one or small-group viewing with computers and DVD is one that Dwoskin's brand of hyper-personal cinema has been awaiting. But in this context of home consumption, it will surely be a deliciously subversive counterspectacle—its variousness working against any standardizing amalgamation whatsoever.

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DVD DATA *Stephen Dwoskin 14 Films.* Director: Stephen Dwoskin. © 1968–2003 Stephen Dwoskin. Publisher: Les Films du Renard, 2007. €99.00, 5 discs.

SANSHO THE BAILIFF

With Criterion's just-released digitization, our experience of *Sansho the Bailiff* has been split in two: there, in an evergreen jewel box, lies the precious *Sansho*-object in its best possible state; it has become a definitive edition, the Platonic idea of itself. But here, in our memories, lies the *Sansho*-aura, inseparable from the romance of reading *Cahiers du cinéma* and the thrill of watching scratched, dirty prints in run-down theaters at inconvenient hours. Once the same thing, object and aura are now estranged. The *Sansho*-object now looks harsh and unnatural in its digitized perfection, coolly removed from the past we shared with it. Not that this newly won hauteur does it much good; though relieved of myriad small defects, it has lost its grandeur (even literally: *Sansho* will never be larger than our TV screen); and in becoming immortal, it no longer bears life's vital signs. Meanwhile, the *Sansho*-aura submits to a fatal blow of its own; severed from organic contact with its object, it wilts into sentimental regret for a mere patina. If the Criterion *Sansho* keeps becoming a film we don't quite remember having seen, what we *do* remember of past viewings now strikes us as a dim prophecy that, being fulfilled, deserves to be swept away in the DVD revolution, along with the grime enshrouding the images and the grease sizzling on the soundtrack. Under these circumstances, it is almost certain that, by the year 2032, stalwarts of the old-time cinephilia will gather en masse to watch the facsimile of a deteriorating print of *Sansho the Bailiff*, complete with trashed images, the old grill cooking up a storm, and subtitling too butch to translate more than one phrase in ten. Admittedly, the congregants will worship in bad faith, as at a black mass, for in their hearts they will know that the true *Sansho*, the *Sansho* of which they sit adoring an effigy, abides in the evergreen shrine. Whence, if it could speak, it might boast with perfect honesty, "You know, I haven't aged in twenty-five years!" But there will be another irrefutable truth uttered when, at the end of the showing, one old man says to another: "now *that* was a pristine transfer!"

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Sansho became famous for two things: one was its fable of redemption, of human dignity affirmed under the inhuman, albeit man-made, conditions of slavery and prostitution.† The other was its director's mise-en-scène, the spectacle of formal mastery that appeared in every composition, long take, and crane shot; this spectacle may have been called "subtle," "quiet," "tender," and "musical," but such terms were only an acceptable way to take the edge off an assertion of aesthetic will as aggressive as Hitchcock's. That the mythic fable and the famous manner are quite different things, the Criterion *Sansho* allows us to recognize as never before. For though Sansho's material deterioration obviously spared the fable, whose plot, characters, and themes survived intact in even the worst of prints, it did considerably dim the spectacle of Mizoguchi's style; with each new scratch, every fresh patch of obscurity, his framing lost some precision, his editing surrendered a bit of finesse. Though his main forms (the pictorialism, the long take, the crane shot) still loomed in the overall twilight, they were less seen than verified as trademarks. No longer able to command a response that would match its rigor, Mizoguchi's style circulated with *Sansho*'s bad prints as little more than mystique. We continued to parrot the *Cahiers* critics in pronouncing it "pitch-perfect," "beautiful," "elegant," etc., but the increasing vagueness of such descriptors only sealed the arcanum. In its degraded condition, the style became indistinguishable from the fable, an aesthetic variant on its humanist theme. *Sansho* appeared to bear its dull, spotted, scarred complexion with the same poignant dignity as characters in the film endured face-branding, maiming, and prostitution; the stylistic feats resembled the human triumphs in being subdued and qualified, ultimately uncertain.

But if *Sansho*'s material deterioration had left its style rather literally in the dust, its material restoration now—quite usefully—throws its humanism in the shade. Unaltered, the fable plainly bears its historical date, the date of other postwar parables of man's "essential humanity" such as *Rashomon* (1950), *The Seventh Seal* (1956), or *Umberto D* (1951). The decorous understatedness extolled at Venice in 1954, in Paris in 1960, and in New York in 1969 (when I first saw *Sansho*), now seems the high-end wrapping on a forthright message movie. By contrast, the mise-en-scène, in being refreshed and hence defamiliarized, can never have enjoyed a fiercer power of address even in 1954 (when the fable, too, was new). There is no longer any danger that Mizoguchi's style will be subsumed to his fable, or his cinema to his humanism. In its superlative new rawness, the Criterion *Sansho* lets us grasp that style in its (cold, violent, ironic, creepy, "fascinating") *distance* from the humanist messages also being expressed in

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the film. Now that *Sansho* can be properly seen, we may not quite like what we see. For all its obvious beauties, something about it is hard on the eyes.

Can it be a mere coincidence that Criterion allows us, by pressing a single button on our remote, to replace this rejuvenated *Sansho* with a superannuated one as old as Heian Japan? In the exchange, the exigent images that have been cleaned of their dirt are once more covered up, this time in the anemic banality of Jeffrey Angles's commentary. Though bonded to the visuals like a lamination, this commentary has utterly nothing to say about them. It is too busy delivering a survey of tourist-grade Nipponiana: Noh, kabuki, gagaku, charcoal drawings, woodblock prints—everything from the front matter of a guide to Old Japan is called into service here, minus the section on lacquerware. Should this tactic be insufficient to distract our attention, Angles has another: he offers us a variorum of the Sansho legend, complete with all the episodes Mizoguchi left out or didn't know about. Of this commentary that, instead of commenting on the visuals, merely annotates them to death, the effective mission is clear: to rescind the restoration. Angles does more than not see the film; he un-sees it.

But it would have been more honest to ignore the visuals entirely than to construct a pseudo-visuality in their place, as Angles also does. On the film's opening composition, a tree crossing the frame on the diagonal, he has this to say: "the use of space is reminiscent of pre-modern Japanese scroll paintings and woodblock prints that activate the foreground with some sort of dramatic movement." And on the final crane shot, this: "Critics have praised this shot of sea and sky as exquisitely Japanese, much like the dramatic landscapes we often see in sumi-e ink paintings." It is symptomatic of the edition's anticinematic bias that it reprints Mori Ogai's 1915 source story as a bonus booklet—for the benefit of the variorum presumably—while it evinces no interest in reproducing even one ink painting or woodblock print that might make such points genuinely visual ones, instead of inert factoids. What Jacques Rivette observed in 1958 still holds for this misconceived Japanization of *Sansho*: "It may be that [Mizoguchi's] films owe something to the spirit of Noh or Kabuki, but then who is to teach us the meaning of those traditions?" And who, one might add, is to teach us why they are resorted to here, or how they are refashioned to fit the autonomous forms of cinema, an art unknown in premodern Japan and hardly reducible to its horizons? Who is to teach us that, in 1954, Mizoguchi's reminiscences of premodern tradition are necessarily signs of a chosen *relation* to tradition, of a rhetoric of traditionalism that places him in an ideological and not just a cultural field? But perhaps it is simplest to say that, at the end of this commentary's long night, all *Sansho* remains to be seen.

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What might there be to see? Always incipient in Mizoguchi's beautiful images and magisterial camera movements is a spectacle of the Unwatchable. Ordinarily in *Sansho*, this Unwatchable is merely intimated, as a sight we are being spared; cuts elide the face-brandings, and a crane shot averts us from the final tête-à-tête of mother and son (which, in its overwhelming emotional appeal, may be thought to pose its own threat to civilization). The Unwatchable has been less obstructed, no doubt, than decanted into cinematic form: the cuts are themselves rather violent, and the crane shot annihilates the human world more effectively than the vicious tsunami that we learn had swept over the same shore not long before. In one instance, however, Mizoguchi abandons even this much discretion. I have in mind an astonishing tracking shot—strictly, two shots fluently seamed together—in the chapter here called "Petition." Watch it with me.

Zushio, having escaped from Sansho's compound, is hidden under the veranda of the Emperor's chief advisor at Kyoto; he bears a testimonial that, if accepted, would put him once again in the company of free men. When the official crosses the veranda, Zushio starts up from beneath like an apparition; he bawls out his petition with similar vehemence—it is his only chance. Amazingly, the official remains unfazed; escorted by myriad attendants, he strides the entire porch without a single glance at the supplicant. But Zushio, too, is resolute. The camera tracks him for almost a full half-minute, as he scrambles along the ground, one hand clutching the railing, the other waving his letter, to keep up with the entourage on the porch. The longer his demand for recognition goes unmet, the more visibly hysterical he becomes. I mean that precisely, for what is most unbearable in this Via Dolorosa is his freakishly gaping eyes, which seem to have lost their human bearings; the pupils can't find a focus; if they were arms, they would be flailing in free fall. In classic cinema, which knows only significant glances, these eyes are a scandal; they are as hard to meet as those of a bird, baby, or madman. Our own eyes, as if catching their disorder, flee the intently sustained sight of them to the corners of the screen.

One reason the episode stands out is that no later scene fulfills its implicit narrative promise; Zushio never receives a look of human recognition that, equivalently pronounced and prolonged, might be seen to reverse its absolute withholding here. Even Zushio's mother—who so proper to bestow that mirror look?—has become blind by their final meeting. But another reason is the specifically cinematic intensity of the shot; though smooth as silk, even with the seam, the moving camera is hardly unassuming; its very gliding obtrudes in the stark contrast with Zushio's sideward hobbling. And in

Zushio's wild eyes. © 1954 Daiei. DVD: Criterion Collection

putting itself in the scene thus, the camera makes it a very different scene, a scene that no longer takes place in the fable, but in a strange proto-postmodern corridor that puts the fable in direct communication with its cinematic narration. In this different scene, the horror is not that the official refuses Zushio's look, but that the camera, from the very height from which he might have returned that look, bestows its own. It is the peculiar ocular exchange that *does* happen, not the banal one that fails, which is responsible for the weird, inhuman "expression" in his eyes.

Camera and character gaze at one another in mutually aghast fascination. The camera sees the human abjection from which—up where character is down, fluid where he stumbles—it tacitly claims its exemption. Character in turn sees an inhuman machine whose unrelenting scrutiny proves no less barbarously objectifying than the official's cold shoulder. But the implicit recoil of each on seeing the other is equally the insinuated *attraction* of both to their uncanny mirror image. After all, Zushio, figure of "the human," pops into view as though on a spring, repeating the same words and gestures like an overwound robot. Conversely, the mechanical camera's sheer bravura confirms that it shares with him at least one distinctively human requirement: it, too, wants to be looked at, recognized. If the new DVD edition divides our experience of *Sansho*, it also lets us see with admirable clarity how conflicted this experience always was.

† As is well known, this fable involves the break-up of an aristocratic Heian family. The father, a provincial governor, is exiled for his activism on behalf of the peasants; on the way to join him, his wife and two children are kidnapped; she is sold into prostitution, they into slavery. In the compound of Sansho, the titular "bailiff" (slave-driver), the father's humanitarian values are tested in both Anju, the daughter, who retains them, and her brother Zushio, who becomes Sansho's right-hand man. Anju sacrifices herself so that Zushio may escape. Rehabilitated as an imperial official, he frees Sansho's slaves; and after their liberation, he resigns to go in search of his mother, now halt and blind. The film ends with their reunion on the shore of Sado island—or almost: a final crane shot turns from them to look on the sea, the seaweed, and a seaweed gatherer.

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DVD DATA *Sansho the Bailiff.* Director: Kenji Mizoguchi. © 1954 Daiei. Publisher: Criterion Collection, 2007. $39.95, 1 disc. Catalog number: CC1692D.

NAZI CINEMA REVISITED

JOHANNES VON MOLTKE

As an enduringly popular topic in film history, the study of Nazi cinema now has a history of its own. The "canonical story" of Nazi cinema studies that most of these books rehearse in their introductions runs something like this: in the 1960s and 70s, historians and political scientists initiated the field with a "first wave" of work on Nazi propaganda; this groundwork has been followed, since the mid-1990s, by a new, revisionist historiography informed by methodologies in film and cultural studies, whose focus has been popular genre cinema. The two publications widely recognized as having set off this "second wave" were Linda Schulte-Sasse's *Entertaining the Third Reich* (Duke University Press, 1996) and Eric Rentschler's *The Ministry of Illusion* (Harvard University Press, 1996). In a clear sign of a disciplinary paradigm shift, these two texts now serve as the established reference points for new work. A decade on, it is time to take stock. Have scholars continued to pursue the directions opened up by the shift from a "first" to a "second" wave historiography? In the ever-accumulating work, what is truly new? Which questions still remain open? The work considered here is diverse and wide-ranging, so I shall confine myself to recurrent motifs, common assumptions, and the degree to which individual contributions diverge from the canonical story to offer new vistas.

Reviewing these books, one is struck by a recurrent figure around which questions of film and popular culture under National Socialism converge: each of these authors has something to tell us about the figure of the female film star. The touchstone for most authors remains Zarah Leander, about whose post-war career among queer audiences much has been written (notably by Alice Kuzniar *Queer German Cinema* [Stanford University Press, 2000]); the contributions here insist on placing the Swedish-born diva—"arguably Nazism's biggest and most complicated star persona" (Ascheid, 9)—back in her "original" historical contexts, with a particular emphasis on her function as a contradictory cultural icon during the war years, when she starred in the home-front film *Die grosse Liebe* (*The Great Love*, 1942). The recurrence of Leander reflects an implicit scholarly consensus that she best incarnates the ideological functions and limitations of Nazi stardom. Underpinning this consensus, we can infer, first, the methodological conviction that stardom constitutes an epicenter of popular culture, and, second, the more or less explicitly argued assumption that the gender politics of popular culture are signified with particular acuity by the female star.

In *Hitler's Heroines*, Ascheid programmatically unravels this assumption with the intention of offering "a more complex feminist history of women in the Third Reich" (8). She juxtaposes normative notions of Nazi womanhood with the rather more complex performances and images of femininity on view in the cinema. Drawing on theorizations of stardom in Cultural Studies, Ascheid argues that "the stars of fascism must be seen as containing the cultural incongruities of the period, or better, as the embodiments of particular societal conflicts and contradictions" (35). Viewed through this lens, the Hungarian-born Kristina Söderbaum appears as an unruly incarnation of melodramatic "excess." Lilian Harvey, whose career spans the Weimar and Nazi years and includes a stint in Hollywood, looks rather more cosmopolitan and "modern" than National Socialist ideals of womanhood would allow; and Zarah Leander, whom the film studios "imported" from Sweden by way of Vienna as a replacement for Marlene Dietrich, becomes an "exemplary figure of contradiction and incoherence" (161). While Ascheid occasionally overreaches in her valuation of such contradictions and their potential to destabilize the ideological matrix of National Socialism, these broad arguments are born out in some detail through both textual and contextual readings. A substantial and often stunningly revealing sampling of the trade and popular press adds depth, buttressing Ascheid's claims.

While each of the stars discussed in *Hitler's Heroines* is certainly unique, they do represent certain cultural "types" of the kind that were prevalent during the Weimar period (to wit, Harvey's "girlish" image) and that have been charted in typological star studies from Edgar Morin onward. By contrast, Leni Riefenstahl—if she is to be considered under the

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rubric of stardom in the first place—obstinately remains a star in a category all her own. Rainer Rother's monograph on the director (and dancer and actress and *persona non grata*) is perhaps the most modest of the books under review, offering a reassessment not of Nazi cinema as a whole, but of the career of Riefenstahl as "Hitler's director" (74). To be sure, Ray Müller's 1993 film on Riefenstahl's "wonderful, horrible life" (originally entitled *Die Macht der Bilder* [*The Power of Images*]) had already provided a masterful portrait of her naïve, cantankerous, self-indulgent, and occasionally ingenious persona. But Rother's highly readable study succeeds at adding historical depth and another level of reflection to what we know about Riefenstahl. Emphasizing that his goal is *not* to write a biography, but to trace the construction of the public "figure" of Riefenstahl, Rother frames his study with some thoughts on "greatness" under the Nazis, drawing on Walter Benjamin's materialist claim that "a work is not famous because it is great—it is great because it is famous" (12). In other words, Rother ties Riefenstahl's fame to her legacy—her notoriety, her publicly recognized achievements, and the mythologies she fashioned with the help of an "unusual egocentrism" (131).

While this approach makes the emphasis on her "talent" or "genius" (in the German and English titles of the book, respectively) look somewhat misleading, it serves as a useful key to Riefenstahl's career—particularly when Rother couples the emphasis on effect and hindsight with a judicious use of the archive. With the help of contemporary reviews, Rother usefully contextualizes Riefenstahl's self-fashioned image, demonstrating where she overreached in her self-praise, and where she withheld information that would have detracted from her image. His detailed discussions of all of Riefenstahl's works reveal a historian's sensibility coupled with a careful consideration of the formal properties of the films; where Riefenstahl would have liked to see these films and their ostensibly timeless aesthetic merits dissociated from their historical context, Rother ties them back to the circumstances of their production—including Hitler's and Goebbels's initial infatuation with the artist, and her delight in this—and to the modalities of their reception.

Opting for an entirely different approach to Nazi stardom, *Dietrich's Ghosts* stands out as the most innovative contribution on the aesthetics and culture of cinematic "personality" under Fascism. The book is notable for its considerations of institutional trajectories, the notion of "personality" in Nazi cinema, the training and the role of actors, and of the under-studied question of cinema exhibition during the Third Reich. The most surprising insight to emerge from Carter's discussion is arguably the (neo-)Kantian conception of the aesthetic that binds them all together. Paying special attention to Kant's theorization of the beautiful and the sublime, Carter deftly tracks the reverberations of these concepts in Nazi film theory and practice—showing, for example, how the latter inherited Kant's notion that "beauty" had the capacity to produce social cohesion, or how the Nazi treatment of the star as "personality" traded on an implicit notion of the "*völkisch* sublime." On this basis, Carter is able to chart both the rise of actor-"personalities" such as Froehlich and Jannings, the discursive makeover of Marlene Dietrich from sublime to beautiful, and the converse ascendancy of Zarah Leander (via the expansive suggestiveness of her signature voice) to the sublime.

While Carter's book thus participates in the general trend toward studying the popular under National Socialism with a particular eye toward Nazi stardom, her carefully historicizing approach to the aesthetic also sets this book apart and foregrounds a crucial methodological issue: where Ascheid, for example, draws heavily—and justifiably—on recent cultural-studies work on stardom to explore the semiotics of Harvey's, Söderbaum's, and Leander's "star images," Carter's research suggests that we may need to rewrite the very coordinates in which we plot the phenomenon and image of the star as such through a critical reconstruction

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Popular Cinema of the Third Reich by Sabine Hake. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. $55.00 cloth; $24.95 paper. 272 pages.

of historical theories of "personality." Carter's elaboration of what amounts to a neo-Kantian, Nazi theory of stardom makes good methodological sense: without in any way discounting the profound parallels and exchanges between Hollywood and Nazi cinema (discussed explicitly by Koepnick or Hake, for example), we should still be ready to adjust methods developed for the study of capitalist consumer culture for contexts that are defined by very different modes of cultural regulation—from the streamlining (*Gleichschaltung*) of the film industry under Goebbels to the racial laws of the Nazi state. Taken as a theoretical compass, Richard Dyer's or Jackie Stacey's work on stardom, for example, may not be fully adequate to the task of reconstructing the historical specificities of the Nazi cult of personality, the distinctions between "actor" and "star" during the Third Reich, or the construction of the *völkisch* sublime. Among the burgeoning studies of Nazi popular culture, *Dietrich's Ghosts* goes a long way toward anchoring the discussions of "popular" entertainment in specific historical and theoretical contexts that have the power to alter our understanding of what constitutes National Socialist ideas of "the popular" in the first place.

This also means to dislodge the dominant template for understanding popular culture on a global scale, which is to say: Hollywood. The Nazis' infatuation with Hollywood is by now well known, of course, and the "remake" of Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* as *Glückskinder* (*Lucky Kids*, 1936) has served as case study for more than one discussion (see Rentschler, Ascheid, and Cary Nathenson's article in Reimer). But the larger point that is at stake involves the historical and conceptual relationship of entertainment in a totalitarian state to its capitalist counterpart—which, of course, was precisely the argument broached by Adorno and Horkheimer in the chapter on "entertainment as mass deception" from *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). Lutz Koepnick tackles that argument head-on in a study that mirrors German and American film culture—Berlin and Hollywood—during Fascism. In this respect, *The Dark Mirror* expands the geographical reach of what is generally considered in studies of Nazi cinema by looking not only at productions within the Third Reich, but also at the work of exiles who fled Hitler's Germany and took up work in Hollywood. This approach highlights some intriguing new material, as in a chapter on the only seemingly oxymoronic genre of the Nazi Western, or in Koepnick's consideration of a multiple-language production such as Curtis Bernhadt's *Der Tunnel* (*The Tunnel*, 1933). But Koepnick also makes a specific methodological contribution. Beginning with the transition to sound—which, in Germany, roughly coincides with the rise of Fascism—and pursuing the echoes of Wagner's musical aesthetics across the Atlantic, Koepnick shifts the terms of debate in some fundamental ways by adopting a framework that focuses on the *auditory* dimension of film as much as on its visual "texts."

Koepnick intervenes in the debates on popular cinema during the Third Reich with the stated goal of tracing what he calls the *Sonderweg* of German popular cinema. Given the multiple divisions, displacements, borrowings, and doublings that define this "special path" between Hitler and Hollywood, Koepnick argues, German cinema from the 1930s through 50s defies integration into any kind of unified national narrative (1). While Koepnick may be somewhat overstating his own case here (after all, his judicious references to Adorno and Horkheimer suggest something far more pervasive and less nationally specific in the mass cultural manifestations of Germany on the one hand and Hollywood on the other), his assertion of a *Sonderweg* sets him apart from an implicit project that otherwise unites many of the studies under consideration here. Sabine Hake's book has the welcome advantage of stating this project most bluntly and, arguably, of executing it most convincingly: "my study on popular cinema in the Third Reich," she announces in the preface, "calls for the normalization of German film history" (viii). As Hake is undoubtedly well aware, the term "normalization" can resonate in complex ways in the context of German culture after the Holocaust. Eric Rentschler had already warned at the conclusion to his study that "films of the Nazi era are easy to enlist in campaigns to normalize and neutralize the Nazi legacy" (221).

Thankfully, both Hake and David Bathrick (who also invokes the term in his introduction to Reimer's volume) take care to limit the intended scope of this normalization. Whereas Bathrick sees a need to extract Nazi cinema "out of the realm of pure demonology" (4), the term *normalization* "should not be construed to mean exculpation;" rather, it means for him "historicization and contextualization in its broadest aesthetic and thematic sense" (2). Hake goes further in specifying the reasons for her call to normalize Nazi film history: writing against the treatment of Third Reich cinema as "the ultimate Other," she insists on placing the Hitler years back into the chronology of German cinema as a whole, on periodizing popular cinema in new ways that span from the Weimar years into the 1950s and beyond. On a methodological level, Hake also insists that we finally expose the cinema of the Third Reich "to the full range of critical perspectives available within film studies"—a task that has ostensibly been blocked by the (more or less argued) as-

sumption of Nazi Cinema's *Sonderweg*, which required special treatment.

Viewed from this perspective, "much of the basic research still needs to be done and many of the questions have not even been asked," Hake suggests (2). Far from claiming to exhaust those open areas for research herself, Hake moves on to adopt what she calls a "kaleidoscopic" approach that brings into focus isolated facets of popular cinema in the Third Reich—facets that often resonate in intriguing ways with the work of other scholars in the field. While Hake thus deliberately foregoes the conceptual coherence of a study such as Carter's, for example, the resulting "coverage" is undoubtedly a strength of her approach: she crosses received period boundaries in a chapter on films made in 1933 (a similar, but historically and theoretically less ambitious, project informs Heidi Faletti's chapter on the relationship between Nazi propaganda and the Weimar street film in Reimer); she delves into considerations of Ufa set design under the Nazis; she traces the Nazis' own conceptualization of the popular audience in a historically nuanced chapter on film spectatorship (which serves as an excellent companion piece to Carter's discussion of exhibition); or she takes up the issue of German–American relations in terms of reception and (trade) policy—a discussion with obvious ramifications for the Berlin–Hollywood connection as traced by Koepnick. Finally, Hake insists that it remains impossible to "contain" Nazi cinema in its temporal borders in a final chapter on its legacies in films and film culture of the 1950s. Here, Hake's work interfaces with Rentschler's meticulous attention to the "afterlife" of Nazi cinema; with Rother's reconstruction of Riefenstahl's function as a "symbolic figure in the discussion of National Socialism" after 1945 (134); and with Ascheid's suggestions regarding the continuity of female stereotypes from Nazi cinema in the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s.

In Hake's "kaleidoscopic" approach, normalization amounts, in other words, to a reconsideration of Nazi cinema through the lenses honed by film scholars. It is a call, if not to abandon auteurist and symptomatic readings of the kind that predominate in Reimer's study (as Hake's own chapter on Sierck also suggests, these do retain their usefulness—especially, one might add, in the classroom, where case studies of this sort form an enduringly useful pedagogical tool), then certainly to open up the field to broader questions of cultural, institutional, and industrial history. Paired with continuing theoretical attention to the popular and the national, as in Hake's study, such questions promise to yield new investigations into trade, cultural policy, programming, exhibition, production, history, spectatorship, among others. Far from exhausted, the field is indeed ripe for further exploration, as Hake suggests. In keeping with this spirit of opening up the debate, I would like to offer two concluding and somewhat speculative thoughts on some terrain noticeably uncharted in the work under review.

The first observation concerns a conspicuous disciplinary absence in the field of Nazi cinema studies as constituted by these texts. To be sure, Hake is right to call for an approach more comprehensively based in the discipline of Film Studies. But given the history of the field, I wonder whether the paradigm shift from the "first wave" historians to the now-established "second wave" of film scholars is not too neat. Given the complexities of the field and the questions that still await research, it seems to me that we should not trade the potentials of interdisciplinarity for an undialectical swing of the pendulum from History to Film Studies. To my mind, the field continues to be served best by engaging in the kinds of interdisciplinary conversation among film scholars and historians that Scott Spector first called for in "Was The Third Reich Movie-Made? Interdisciplinarity and the Reframing of 'Ideology,'" an essay published in the April 2001 issue of the *American Historical Review* in response to Rentschler's and Schulte-Sasse's books. But the contours of that conversation have shifted somewhat since Spector's important stock-taking: where he suggested that historians look to the film scholars for their methodology, and for their notions of ideology, one is now tempted to remind film scholars of the importance of historical work on Fascism and Nazi culture. Having inaugurated it with studies of Nazi propaganda, historians, in turn, appear to have vacated the field of Nazi film studies in favor of film scholars with more or less well-attuned historical antennae. While this certainly reflects a shift towards more and better archival research within Film Studies, it seems that the field as a whole would be well served by continuing debate with trained cultural, institutional, and political historians, from whose vantage questions of subversion and consent, of text and context, of history and theory, and indeed of "Fascism" itself occasionally play out quite differently than from within Film Studies per se.

My second observation concerns issues of the national, the international or, as more recent debates have it, the transnational. To be sure, Nazi cinema easily appears as the most "national" of all German cinemas—it was maintained by and for the state through protectionist politics, its flagship productions celebrated the Nazi "new man" and it served, together with other media such as newspaper and radio, as a quintessential propaganda vehicle for Nazi ideology. And yet, if we follow Hake's call to submit Nazi cinema "to the full range of

critical perspectives available within film studies," shouldn't we also expand the geographical scope beyond the confines of the nation? Here, I am not thinking of the comparisons and contrasts between Goebbels's "Ministry of Illusion" and Joseph Breen's Hollywood, which many scholars have taken up (including Rentschler, Koepnick, and Hake). Instead, the central desideratum of an internationalized study of Nazi film would be a comparative approach to Fascist cinemas that adopts the full range of stylistic, institutional, industrial, and theoretical approaches available to film scholars and historians alike. (This suggestion grows out of discussions with my colleagues Markus Nornes and Anne Berg.) In her work on Fascist cinema in Italy in *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (University of California Press, 2001), Ruth Ben-Ghiat provocatively suggests that "at the height of fascist protectionism, Italy's film industry remained among the most cosmopolitan in Europe." Perhaps the Nazi film industry in Germany was secure enough in its hegemony during the 1930s to obviate similar transnational forays—but perhaps we simply have yet to ask the right questions: what were the cultural and trade relations regarding film among the Axis powers and their satellites? How do individual productions from different Fascist countries align in terms of themes (colonialism, war), styles (monumentalism? ornamentalism?), genres, policies, or legal frameworks? What insights would comparisons between individual films such as *Il Grande Appello* (1936) and *La Habanera* (1937) yield—both of which take place in ostensibly "remote" locations but enact manifestly "local" conflicts? How do issues such as gender, sexuality, death or the idea of the *Führer* play out across the spectrum of Fascist cinemas? As long as we take care not to reduce the complexities that await us in posing these questions to facile definitions of a singular Fascist style, let alone of an all-encompassing "totalitarian" idea of culture, these would seem to be the kinds of investigations that could further open up the field mapped out by these books.

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CULTURAL POLITICS

ARTHUR KNIGHT

Body and Soul: Jazz and Blues in American Film, 1927–63 by Peter Stanfield

Don't let the blandly descriptive title of Peter Stanfield's *Body and Soul: Jazz and Blues in American Film, 1927–63* fool you. This book is not a reference work. (Stanfield sensibly cedes that territory to David Meeker's *Jazz in the Movies* [1981], which is now available as an online, searchable database called "Jazz on the Screen," hosted by the Library of Congress.) Nor is it one of those books that march encyclopedically, and often tediously, through every conceivable example of the phenomenon under examination. Depending on how jazz and blues are defined—and Stanfield, following the lead of jazz and cinema scholar Krin Gabbard, is inclined to define them capaciously rather than restrictively—such a march could be very long. Stanfield has clearly made the full journey himself, but he doesn't demand it of the reader. *Body and Soul* is his incisive report back from the field of a wide range of Hollywood films—melodramas, crime films, musicals, comedies—that use, sometimes centrally but more often in crucial but taken-for-granted ways, jazz and blues-inflected music to figure and probe American identity.

In fact, the phrase "Body and Soul" in Stanfield's hands is not the cliché it threatens to be. Rather, it neatly encapsulates the core of his argument and indicates a crucial aspect of his method. *Body and Soul* will be most familiar to film lovers, of course, as the title of a noirish 1947 boxing movie starring John Garfield, directed by Robert Rossen, written by Abraham Polonsky, and, as these credits suggest, displaying impeccable leftist cultural front inclinations. For jazz lovers, on the other hand, "Body and Soul" names a popular jazz standard, available in versions by a wide array of artists and still in the repertoire of "classically" inclined jazz musicians. More importantly, in the version recorded in 1939 by saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, "Body and Soul" names *the* iconically smoky small-combo jazz performance—a performance that is visceral in its ability to convey and create mood and, at the same time, subtly demanding of the listener's intellect, since Hawkins's improvisations wander far from the basic melody. Just as "Body and Soul" for cinephiles means the Garfield/Rossen/Polonsky *Body and Soul*, unless otherwise qualified (for example, Oscar Micheaux's *Body and Soul* [1925], starring Paul Robeson, or the *Body and Soul* [1931] that provided Bogart his third credited screen role, or another of at least ten possibilities), "Body and Soul" for jazz lovers means the Hawkins version.

All of this is important to Stanfield because it reminds us of the complex social and cultural network that surrounds the song—or perhaps even *is* the song. "Body and Soul" originated in 1930, when it was penned by the composer–arranger Johnny Green for the torch singer Libby Holman to perform in a Broadway review, and from there it moved into the jazz and cinematic realms described above. So, it begins with a white composer working in a commodified cultural form (the Broadway show tune) that both refers to and repudiates African American "folk" forms ("pure[r]" jazz, "pure[r]" blues), and with a man working to provide a medium for the voice of a woman; it is taken up and turned to new, but no less commodified ends of self- and collective expression by a black instrumentalist; and all of this is taken up and turned yet again in a progressively-minded Hollywood genre film—one which struggles with question of individual and group identities inflected by ethnicity, gender, and the stresses of working class urban life.

Stanfield's work on "Body and Soul" and *Body and Soul* exemplifies his method. Throughout the book he fastens on single songs—"Frankie and Johnny" and "St. Louis Blues," for example—as strands of cultural DNA, and he traces the combinations and recombinations of meaning that accrue around them as they circulate back and forth from "folk" to "mass" cultural texts and contexts: texts and contexts that Stanfield sees as emphatically interwoven. In the case of "Frankie and Johnny," this means that we trace the song from its diverse roots in the eighteenth-century South to its formalization in and around the Black demi-monde of turn-of-the-century St. Louis and from there to its publication, its popularization on stage and via recording, and its dispersal and fragmentary use in a wide array of 1930s films centered on working-class white female protagonists of uncertain virtue and purity, like Mae West in *She Done Him*

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Wrong (1933), Barbara Stanwick in *Ladies of Leisure* (1930), or Helen Twelvetrees in *Her Man* (1930).

Stanfield argues that Hollywood filmmakers felt compelled to take up these knotty musical materials as a way of luring in—or attempting to lure—the "general" audience in a three-decade period when the meanings of that generality were up for grabs. Of course, Stanfield acknowledges that the instability of American identity goes back much earlier than the rise of sound film. For him, though, it is only with the rise of synchronized sound that American film—a mass medium reaching a potentially unprecedentedly huge audience—can truly, textually ingest the American forms of performance that are at once most static and most protean, and thus address conflicts over American identity using "traditional" American means. On the static side of the equation are blackface minstrelsy and female impersonation. On the protean side are the rapidly commercialized, seemingly infinitely mutable popular song forms that invariably accompanied minstrelsy and impersonation.

For readers familiar with the last decade's revisionist analyses of blackface minstrelsy—Eric Lott's *Love and Theft* (Oxford University Press, 1995) and Michael Rogin's *Blackface/White Noise* (University of California Press, 1996), Dale Cockrell's *Demons of Disorder* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and W. T. Lhamon's *Raising Cain* (Harvard University Press, 1998)—some of the territory Stanfield covers will feel a little familiar. He favors Cockrell and Lhamon's more carnivalesque interpretations of blackface over Lott and (especially) Rogin's more proscriptive critiques, but all the same his historical narrative sometimes echoes these critics, seeing possibility early (in *The Jazz Singer*'s obviously magical fusing of identities in its struggle to find a happy ending) and dead ends later (in everything else Jolson did, for instance, or in *Show Boat* [1936]). He can also sometimes incline to connoisseurship in place of analysis (histories of many of the songs note a great number of obscure recordings that are "indispensable" for the reader to have; Rouben Mamoulian's *Applause* [1929] and several of Samuel Fuller's films, all of which receive sensitive readings, are "great art"—even if they seem not to have been much appreciated by the people they were aimed at). The 1930s are the real focus of the book; the 50s receive considerable attention, but the 40s (and especially the war era) are touched on fairly lightly, though we're not told why. Perhaps most damaging to the book's argument is the lack of much attempt to understand the reception of these films—especially by African Americans whose voice and image figured so prominently and problematically (if sometimes interestingly or provocatively) in them. However, Stanfield does pay detailed and illuminating attention to one key "audience" throughout his book: the Production Code Administration (PCA). He's clearly spent much time in the archives, and it is fascinating to read his interpretations of the PCA's analyses of "objectionable" material in relation to the usually unmentioned music accompanying that material.

The flaws I have touched on are modest, and are far outweighed by the book's strengths. Besides those outlined above, *Body and Soul* also breaks important ground in two important areas. It pays unprecedented attention (only Linda Williams's *Playing the Race Card* [Princeton University Press, 2001] has previously come close in this regard) to how gender worked in relation to race in American popular performance, song, and narrative in conveying and playing with America's classed identities. Joan Crawford as Sadie Thompson in *Rain* (1932) smolders on the book's cover, serving, the reader will come to realize, as a sort of second visual subtitle for the book. And once Stanfield show us how "St. Louis Blues" is used in *Rain* to both convey and rein in Sadie's transgressive sexuality, the book's analysis of how songs and the images they are chosen to accompany (or is it the images that are created to illuminate the songs?) become sites of struggle over identity is fully cemented.

Another great strength of *Body and Soul* is in its filling in gaps—important gaps—in our knowledge of the life of blackface performance in the twentieth century. In a footnote to *Love and Theft* Eric Lott calls the resurgence of blackface performance in Hollywood films the "somewhat baffling afterlife" of nineteenth-century minstrelsy. And in *Blackface/White Noise*, the late Michael Rogin referred a bit cavalierly to "blackface more broadly understood," by which he seemed to mean white performance that referred to black performance styles and traditions, but without recourse to explicit blackface. As I've said, Stanfield's *Body and Soul* is indebted to both of these works, but it goes a great distance in clarifying the bafflement of blackface's "afterlife" and explains in detail how literal blackface disappears while the practices linked with it carry on—provocatively, if also often maddeningly—in Hollywood film of the mid-twentieth century.

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MARK A. REID

Black Magic: White Hollywood and African American Culture by Krin Gabbard

Black Magic: White Hollywood and African American Culture is a book, as the author clearly states, about American films "written by, directed by, produced by, and starring white people." Most books on American cinema cover the same material—white-written, directed, and produced films. But Krin Gabbard adds a twist to the study of classic Euro-American narrative film. In *Black Magic*, he argues for the presence of an ethereal blackness that permeates a basically white film in story, setting, and casting. Gabbard uses the term "magic" to describe how certain films present elements of black culture despite the fact that African Americans are relegated to the background or depicted as merely the savior of white characters, as in *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995) and *The Green Mile* (1999) respectively.

Gabbard argues that, in such a film, black presence in the form of either a black body or the music of black culture defines the film, but is also an absence, a marginalization or erasure. This is an interesting notion, and indeed one could argue the same about the visual-absence-but-spiritual-presence of other silenced gendered and ethnic Americans whose culture is just a backdrop for movies (such as most Hollywood war, Western, and gangster films) in which while males predominate. For instance, the "presence" of Asian Americans in Hollywood films is limited to non-Asian Americans consuming food products identified with Asian Americans, as in the line "let's do Chinese," or the act of going to a sushi bar where we view a mostly non-Asian clientele. The racialized Other is never made visible in these films because it is veiled by the everyday cliché "let's do Chinese" (or something acceptably similar). In the same way, Gabbard considers the way music scores and acting styles surreptitiously borrow, in an act of racialized consumption, from African American culture only to displace the visual importance of the black people and socioeconomic realities that produced blues culture.

Gabbard goes on to trace the consumption of ideas of black masculinity in the acting style of Marlon Brando in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *On the Waterfront* (1954). In discussing Brando's performances, Gabbard suggests that Brando borrowed much from the jazz trumpeter Miles Davis. Davis was well known for his physical abuse of the women he dated. He was also legendary for his sensual music, which defined the cool jazz period of the 1950s and early 60s. Together, Davis's coolness and brutal acts against women signify a pimp-like personality that preys on vulnerable women. Gabbard argues that Brando, in the character of Stanley Kowalski, imitates this Miles Davis pimp-like coolness: "Then as now, many white men have regarded black men as more assertive, more capable of controlling their women through violence. Stanley's wild attack on Stella must be understood at least in part in this context" (41). Unfortunately, the racist idea of the black man as violent, callous, and cool shapes not only America's popular culture but also determines its judicial system and the attitude of its national, state, and local police forces. In the cops' myopic gaze, black men are constantly observed in rearview mirrors rather than directly. *Black Magic* explores white narrative films and unravels this American quilt whose patterns show complex forms of racial lynching.

Gabbard would do well to immediately take into account another fantasy of black male sexuality—the passive, henpecked, shiftless coon. The white male fear of an overpowering black phallus leads to one fantasy being countered with yet another. One need only recall D. W. Griffith's black rapist Gus and its counterpart performed by Willie Best, Mantan Moreland, and, more recently, Michael Clarke Duncan as John Coffey in *The Green Mile*. Krin Gabbard discusses all these competing fictions but he organizes these discussions in separate chapters. This strategy does little to show how such fictions about black masculinity are interconnected, and why they remain dominant in popular culture. Nevertheless, chapter five of *Black Magic* provides an intellectually stimulating analysis of the function of the Coffey character in *The Green Mile*.

Black Magic locates blackness in the music score and the cool acting style of white male stars such as Marlon Brando and Clint Eastwood. Gabbard claims to show how selected films circulate fantasies about African Americans. But, like many scholars of film, literature, and popular culture, his book is indebted to recent work in the relatively new field of Whiteness Studies. I personally have reservations about this research field and question its relevance to an in-depth understanding of black cultures and especially of the atrocities perpetrated against people of color by white people in the Americas. However, Gabbard's writing is original, inventive, and, especially when he discusses black music, *Black Magic* is intelligent and the best such study yet published. Because Gabbard is a seasoned film scholar, a serious jazz scholar, and comfortable with psychoanalytic theory, his arguments are most compelling when he analyzes the importance that jazz plays in infusing blackness, or what he perceives as blackness, into white male characters. In so doing, Gabbard shows how film uses this music to magically veil and covertly highlight an African American presence-through-absence. © 2007 Mark A. Reid

MARK A. REID is author of *Black Lenses, Black Voices: African American Film Now* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005) and *PostNegritude Visual and Literary Culture* (State University of New York Press, 1997).

BOOK DATA Krin Gabbard, *Black Magic: White Hollywood and African American Culture.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004. $62.00 cloth; $24.95 paper. 324 pages.

COLIN GUNCKEL

Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture by Frances Negrón-Muntaner

Frances Negrón-Muntaner's book traces the Puerto Rican presence in U.S. popular culture, unraveling the complexities of transcultural exchange, colonial relations, and transnational capital. Rather than merely providing evidence of the appropriation of exoticized expressive forms, or positing a trajectory of empowerment through media visibility, Negrón-Muntaner situates cultural expression as a "political resource," an affirmation of difference, and, most significantly, a recurring site of contestation, where the terms of Puerto Rican identity are renegotiated and often fiercely debated.

Conducting a selective analysis of diverse cultural phenomena that span the last five decades, the author indeed documents an apparent shift in representational practices and the agency of Puerto Rican performers, from the campy "brown face" of *West Side Story* to the hypervisibility of "Latin" superstars Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez. At the same time, however, she argues that this history, despite significant shifts, can be most usefully understood in relation to a dynamic of "shame," a constitutive feature of Puerto Rican identity. This "shame" (and pride, its obverse) evolved as a product of colonial domination and persists as a feature of an ambiguous official status for the island, whose "national" population is divided as a result of migration. Positing Puerto Rican-ness as an "ethno-nationality" allows Negrón-Muntaner to identify a somewhat coherent social formation that remains paradoxically founded upon and divided by differences of geography, language, and class—factors that inform competing constructions of collective identity.

According to Negrón-Muntaner, elite efforts to counteract "shame" respond to what she describes as a "queer" nationality, imposed through the colonizing gaze of the U.S.: a gendered, racialized, and non-normative construct that situates the "black faggot" as the foundational trope of Puerto Rican identity. If a racially constituted queerness thus haunts the national imaginary, the author argues that *West Side Story* (filmed in 1961) stages this for an international audience, constituting an originary "shame" for the diasporic population, while simultaneously serving as "a founding site for Puerto Rican-American ethno-national identifications" (60). Examining the film's construction of difference through "brown face" make-up and exaggerated performance (including George Chakiris's "shifting, asinine accent" [66]), Negrón-Muntaner also considers the biographies of its creators (Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins among them) in terms of transculturated homosexual desire. Introducing a methodology that will structure the remainder of the book, the author also examines the career and persona of Rita Moreno, who transcended casting constraints through excessive, self-reflexive performance.

While many scholars have framed transcultural contact through media as a history of representation, Negrón-Muntaner complements such textual analysis with biographical detail and considerations of political economy, proposing a multifaceted approach to the emergence of Puerto Rican visibility in U.S. culture, a process which involved tortured personal struggles for valorization. Warhol Superstar Holly Woodlawn's drag performance, for example, denaturalizes identity construction and undertakes a reflexive parody of shame through the appropriation of a white starlet persona. Her position within the Factory hierarchy nonetheless qualifies as economic exploitation, the mining of subaltern cultural labor for the glorification and profit of a largely Euro-American avant-garde. Similarly, the fragmentation, dismemberment, and oppression evident in the paintings of Jean-Michel Basquiat (recovered by Negrón-Muntaner as an Afro-Caribbean artist), not only give expression to a traumatic social history, but also echo his own position within the speculative art market of the 1980s, his exploitation as artistic labor, and the fact that art-world success did not lesson his stigmatization as a (queer) person of color. The accounts of Woodlawn and Basquiat offer a perspective on the way white artists have consistently drawn inspiration and labor from a multi-ethnic urban milieu. Madonna extends this logic to mass culture, deploying and discarding a racially sexualized Puerto Rican sensibility according to the requirements of her ever-shifting persona.

Throughout *Boricua Pop*, Negrón-Muntaner deploys prevalent markers of Puerto Rican identity as class-inflected frames of reference: the mythologized *jíbaro* that provides a whitened source of indigenous origin, for instance, and the flag that has become the universal symbol of boricua pride despite its partisan history. Hair and language, naturalized as corporeal guarantees of authenticity, have also emerged as sites of contestation between island elites and a poor, dark-skinned majority—struggles over meaning that structure the reception of an increasingly prominent Puerto Rican pres-

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ence in U.S. mass culture. In the last section of the book, "*Boricua* Anatomies," the author treats this enhanced visibility as both a valorization of Puerto Rican identity and as the promotion of a construct that serves particular class interests and the dictates of corporate capital. Here, "shame" is theorized in relation to the body as a potential affirmation of difference, and as a marker of inferiority. Considering the careers of Jennifer Lopez and Ricky Martin, both of which make Puerto Rican identity (and Latino celebrity) visible on an unprecedented international level, Negrón-Muntaner accordingly draws attention to the multivalence of their bodily attributes. If mass media and publicity consistently reduce Lopez's appeal to her abundant posterior, this physical feature undeniably confirms her Afro-Caribbean roots, transforming a potentially "shameful identification" into "a defense of another sensuality and alter/native standards of beauty" (234). Ricky Martin's evocations of pride and ethno-national promotion through an ostensibly wholesome, middle-class persona, on the other hand, are belied by the frenetic shaking of his hips; once again the specter of a racialized queerness lurks beneath dominant assertions of normative nationality.

The nuanced complexity of Negrón-Muntaner's analyses reflects the ambiguity in the objects of study themselves, and their reception by a heterogeneous, transnational audience. Drawing productively from this ambiguity, *Boricua Pop* represents a significant contribution to current scholarship addressing the increasing presence of Latinos in mainstream media, interrogating the promises of citizenship and enfranchisement that have accompanied these shifts, as well as the erasures that this process entails. What lends Negrón-Muntaner's work yet further significance is not only her reading of Puerto Rican representation from mass culture, but also the more ambitious claim that identities are often negotiated through these products and personalities. Although her references to critical debates confirms this only to an extent, and the book lacks a more explicit theorization of the relation between media industries and identity, *Boricua Pop* nonetheless marks an important shift in the articulation of this dynamic.

The positioning of ethno-nationality as a precariously sustained, interstitial construct not only emphasizes this arrangement (and all others) as a process, but also suggests a productive methodology for the analysis of transcultural exchange and popular culture. Avoiding textual appropriation, or the overly celebratory recovery of artists' careers, Negrón-Muntaner's attention to industrial context and contentious reception not only shifts emphasis to transculturation as an uneven process, but also insists upon the multiplicity of meanings generated in each instance. Such a methodology seems most useful in relation to studies of contemporary border-crossing culture, but would also prove productive for historical studies of transnational flows of cultural expression and labor. As Negrón-Muntaner herself points out, such an analysis uncovers the transcultural origins of all U.S. cultural production, hopefully provoking additional work that reconsiders and articulates these genealogies. © 2007 Colin Gunckel

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HANNAH HAMAD

Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood by Stella Bruzzi

Fatherhood narratives have become such an increasingly, and at times overwhelmingly, omnipresent feature of Hollywood cinema in recent years that the publication of Stella Bruzzi's *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood* is not only timely. It also provides the first, and until now conspicuously absent, book-length study to deal exclusively with the subject. The sizeable body of work on cinematic masculinity that emerged in the 1990s brought depictions of paternity to the fore to only a limited extent, and while other more recent publications such as Estella Tincknell's excellent *Mediating the Family: Gender, Culture and Representation* (Hodder Arnold, 2005), and Mike Chopra-Gant's *Hollywood Genres and Postwar America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir* (I. B. Tauris, 2006) incorporate judicious discussions of fatherhood, Bruzzi's is the first full monograph to treat it as a stand-alone Hollywood representational phenomenon. As is often the case in Film Studies, Bruzzi adopts the standpoint of Freudian psychoanalysis, and this is surely valid given the topic of paternity. However, it is to be hoped that one consequence of this book's publication will be that it prompts consideration of the issue from other equally pertinent points of view.

The chapters are ordered chronologically by decade with each divided into subsections highlighting specific textual, narrative, or thematic recurrences in a given period's depiction of fatherhood; these are then expounded through analysis of a handful of films. The book is ambitious in its scope,

ence in U.S. mass culture. In the last section of the book, "*Boricua* Anatomies," the author treats this enhanced visibility as both a valorization of Puerto Rican identity and as the promotion of a construct that serves particular class interests and the dictates of corporate capital. Here, "shame" is theorized in relation to the body as a potential affirmation of difference, and as a marker of inferiority. Considering the careers of Jennifer Lopez and Ricky Martin, both of which make Puerto Rican identity (and Latino celebrity) visible on an unprecedented international level, Negrón-Muntaner accordingly draws attention to the multivalence of their bodily attributes. If mass media and publicity consistently reduce Lopez's appeal to her abundant posterior, this physical feature undeniably confirms her Afro-Caribbean roots, transforming a potentially "shameful identification" into "a defense of another sensuality and alter/native standards of beauty" (234). Ricky Martin's evocations of pride and ethno-national promotion through an ostensibly wholesome, middle-class persona, on the other hand, are belied by the frenetic shaking of his hips; once again the specter of a racialized queerness lurks beneath dominant assertions of normative nationality.

The nuanced complexity of Negrón-Muntaner's analyses reflects the ambiguity in the objects of study themselves, and their reception by a heterogeneous, transnational audience. Drawing productively from this ambiguity, *Boricua Pop* represents a significant contribution to current scholarship addressing the increasing presence of Latinos in mainstream media, interrogating the promises of citizenship and enfranchisement that have accompanied these shifts, as well as the erasures that this process entails. What lends Negrón-Muntaner's work yet further significance is not only her reading of Puerto Rican representation from mass culture, but also the more ambitious claim that identities are often negotiated through these products and personalities. Although her references to critical debates confirms this only to an extent, and the book lacks a more explicit theorization of the relation between media industries and identity, *Boricua Pop* nonetheless marks an important shift in the articulation of this dynamic.

The positioning of ethno-nationality as a precariously sustained, interstitial construct not only emphasizes this arrangement (and all others) as a process, but also suggests a productive methodology for the analysis of transcultural exchange and popular culture. Avoiding textual appropriation, or the overly celebratory recovery of artists' careers, Negrón-Muntaner's attention to industrial context and contentious reception not only shifts emphasis to transculturation as an uneven process, but also insists upon the multiplicity of meanings generated in each instance. Such a methodology seems most useful in relation to studies of contemporary border-crossing culture, but would also prove productive for historical studies of transnational flows of cultural expression and labor. As Negrón-Muntaner herself points out, such an analysis uncovers the transcultural origins of all U.S. cultural production, hopefully provoking additional work that reconsiders and articulates these genealogies. © 2007 Colin Gunckel

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BOOK DATA Frances Negrón-Muntaner, *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture.* New York: New York University Press, 2004. $65.00 cloth; $22.00 paper. 337 pages.

HANNAH HAMAD

Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood by Stella Bruzzi

Fatherhood narratives have become such an increasingly, and at times overwhelmingly, omnipresent feature of Hollywood cinema in recent years that the publication of Stella Bruzzi's *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood* is not only timely. It also provides the first, and until now conspicuously absent, book-length study to deal exclusively with the subject. The sizeable body of work on cinematic masculinity that emerged in the 1990s brought depictions of paternity to the fore to only a limited extent, and while other more recent publications such as Estella Tincknell's excellent *Mediating the Family: Gender, Culture and Representation* (Hodder Arnold, 2005), and Mike Chopra-Gant's *Hollywood Genres and Postwar America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir* (I. B. Tauris, 2006) incorporate judicious discussions of fatherhood, Bruzzi's is the first full monograph to treat it as a stand-alone Hollywood representational phenomenon. As is often the case in Film Studies, Bruzzi adopts the standpoint of Freudian psychoanalysis, and this is surely valid given the topic of paternity. However, it is to be hoped that one consequence of this book's publication will be that it prompts consideration of the issue from other equally pertinent points of view.

The chapters are ordered chronologically by decade with each divided into subsections highlighting specific textual, narrative, or thematic recurrences in a given period's depiction of fatherhood; these are then expounded through analysis of a handful of films. The book is ambitious in its scope,

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covering as it does six decades of Hollywood's output—from the 1940s to the early 2000s—in a relatively modest 234 pages. This necessarily gives it the feel of a broad (though noticeably not a quantitative) survey rather than a pointedly focused study, and while Bruzzi identifies and introduces a host of varied narrative motifs and representational tropes of Hollywood dads through recent decades, she remains quite reticent in drawing conclusions. For example, in chapter one she points to some potentially interesting patterns in the 1940s depiction of father/son relationships, the link between imminent fatherhood and death in combat films, and the conflation of notions of paternity and national character. These points are supported by textual analysis, but their interrelationship has to be inferred by the reader.

Regrettably, the choice of films to be case studies seems somewhat idiosyncratic. The underlying methodology is not clear, unless it is fit with the psychoanalytic approach, despite Bruzzi's disclaimer to the contrary that the case studies are truly "representative: of either prevailing social/cultural attitudes to fathers and fatherhood or of Hollywood's own attitudes to fathers and fatherhood" (viii). So, the work on fatherhood of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan is shown in chapter two to be contemporaneous and thematically comparable to some Hollywood films of the 1950s, namely *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958), *Giant* (1956), and *Written on the Wind* (1956), but the films are not posited as a pronounced trend in paternal representation, nor are they discussed in terms of their genre status as family melodramas. Rather they seem to be discrete examples of Hollywood fatherhood, consciously invoked as being illustrative of Lacan's phallocentric theories on the significance of paternal nomenclature. Similarly, in chapter five, Bruzzi takes the films *Lone Star* (1996), *Affliction* (1998), *Happiness* (1998), *American Beauty* (1999), and *Magnolia* (1999) as evidence of Hollywood's "[d]isengagement with and distrust of the conventional father" (180) in the 1990s and 2000s. However, it seems problematic to consider such relatively low-budget, non-mainstream films with their concomitantly narrow releases (*Happiness* opened in only six theaters and grossed less than $3 million, while *Affliction* opened in just three theaters, grossing $6 million—even the subsequently high-grossing *American Beauty* had a limited initial release of sixteen theaters) as representative or indicative of any major Hollywood trend or tendency.

It must be said that Bruzzi acknowledges in her introduction that her Freudian approach is potentially controversial: "Perhaps the most contentious aspect of the book is its use of psychoanalysis, particularly Freud, but the idea of writing a book about the father in Hollywood without recourse to Freudian thinking is perverse" (xiii). She cites her aforementioned filmic examples to suggest that "a return to Freud, as a means of explicating the sexualised power relations between the generations, is inevitable," asserting that "[t]he dominant model of psychoanalysis has also proved to be the dominant (though not exclusive) model of Hollywood's representation of the father" (188). This assertion is least convincing when it comes to recent films. Whereas in earlier chapters Bruzzi's case studies include box-office giants like *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Kramer Vs Kramer* (1979), and *Three Men and a Baby* (1987), these are not balanced by contemporary work. Indeed, the significance of paternal representation in such high-grossing 1990s mainstream films as *Jerry Maguire* (1996) and *Big Daddy* (1999) is in fact downplayed and, moving forward, even dismissed in the case of *Cheaper By The Dozen* (2003), which Bruzzi writes off as "a film that just happens to have a father in it … [and] is not concerned with issues of fatherhood" (ix). However, an interrogation of the representational specificities of fatherhood in these highly lucrative family films would surely have provided an apt counterpoint to discussions of earlier films, as well as complementing her insightful analyses of paternal and/or filial angst in more arthouse-oriented films such as *Happiness*. What is more, there is little analysis of the significance of specific genres to the representation of fatherhood. On page 38, Bruzzi cites melodrama and comedy as the primary genres to feature fatherhood narratives, and goes on to mention horror and action in chapter four and romantic comedy in chapter five. However, despite identifying them, she does not take the potentially very enlightening opportunity to explore in any detail the intersection between these genres and their presentation of fatherhood narratives.

Chapter five does draw closer attention to some mainstream fare, such as *Gladiator* (2000), which Bruzzi reads as a representation of the resurgence of patriarchal masculinity, instigated by paternal trauma. This is situated as an isolated example in contrast to what is perceived as the more dominant representational trend of disempowered patriarchy exemplified by films like *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* (1992), *The River Wild* (1994), *Disclosure* (1994), and *Don't Say a Word* (2001). However, Bruzzi omits to mention the striking similarity of the paternal themes of *Gladiator* to those of similarly high-profile father films of the period like *The Patriot* (2000), *Road to Perdition* (2002), and *Master and Commander* (2003). Discussion of this similarity would have positioned her reading of *Gladiator* as part of a tangible representational recurrence. She also generously reads the depiction of the gay and cross-dressing fathers in *The Object Of My Affection* (1998), *The Next Best Thing* (2000), and *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993) as utopian and pluralist, describing it as Hollywood's "affirmation of the value of diversity" (180), but some acknowledgment of the infrequency of these portrayals would have provided clearer contextualization.

Bruzzi asserts in the introduction that "[i]t is the particular conjunction of domesticity, traditionalism and a lack of eroticism that forces fathers to exist outside the discursive limits of Film Studies' definitions of masculinity" (xvii). In making a blanket statement such as this so early, she closes herself off from the possibility of extending these perceived limitations through her own detailed interrogations of cinematic fatherhood, or from attempting to explain the disparity that she identifies between accepted paradigms of screen masculinity and the associated but still under-theorized presence of fathers in Hollywood film.

Nevertheless, the sheer range of issues raised, the variety and number of films covered, and the highly illuminating original research undertaken into current publications from every period under examination are all highly impressive. Ultimately, this book is a welcome and useful introduction to Hollywood images of paternity. Hopefully it will set a trend for further scholarship in this relatively under-explored area of filmic gender representation. © 2007 Hannah Hamad

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BOOK DATA Stella Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Post-War Hollywood*. London: BFI Publishing, 2005. $95.00 cloth; $27.95 paper. 234 pages.

DIRECTORS

LLOYD MICHAELS

Elia Kazan: A Biography By Richard Schickel

As a public service to those readers whose primary interest in Elia Kazan remains his notorious role as a friendly witness during the HUAC hearings, I offer the following advice. Visit your local Barnes & Noble, buy a cup of Starbucks, and read the twenty-five pages that constitute the prologue and epilogue of Richard Schickel's new biography. Here you will find a stirring defense of Kazan's "largely symbolic" (xxvi) testimony as well as several intimate backstage glimpses of the old man preparing for the 1999 Oscars ceremony that honored him for lifetime achievement. You will have saved yourself thirty bucks (less the cost of coffee) plus many tedious hours wading through Schickel's derivative account of a remarkable life and body of work. Whatever Kazan's public and private sins, he deserves a better biography.

Perhaps sensing the limitations of his own book, Schickel, the longtime movie critic for *Time* and producer of the film tribute that preceded Kazan's receiving his honorary Oscar, clearly announces that he is writing a *critical* biography rather than a personal one. This decision makes sense, especially in light of the director's remarkably readable, intensely candid, and richly detailed autobiography, *A Life* (1988), and Michel Ciment's superb book-length interview, *Kazan on Kazan* (1974), both of which Schickel cites repeatedly. With the exception of the description of the Oscar controversy and a few well-chosen selections from Kazan's extensive production notes for every play and movie he directed, however, the new book offers very few original critical insights and almost nothing new about Kazan himself, a man not without his loyal or respectful supporters (Schickel prominent among them) but also clearly someone who inspired undying enmity and, apparently, little enduring familial love. The familiar enemies are duly cited, but Kazan intimates, particularly his five children, remain nearly invisible.

Give the author his due, though: Schickel is a good writer who occasionally delivers a telling phrase, as when he describes Kazan as "a seducer, not a dictator" (16) in contrast to his colleague and rival, Lee Strasberg, or defines his best quality as "undaunted exuberance" (432). He accurately assesses the decade of work that began in 1943 as "the most remarkable era any American director ever experienced" (105). He also makes good use of Kazan's unpublished notebooks, excerpting, for example, this confessional description of Willy

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Loman: "In order to endure himself and his state of being he has to be continuously told he's great (JUST LIKE YOU)" (193). And he can be acute in recognizing the connections among Kazan's films, as when he identifies the "theme of the damaged male" (121) beginning with *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945), or describes *A Face in the Crowd* (1957) as "the dark twin" (343) of *Baby Doll* (1956). These moments are all the more welcome because they enliven a chronological narrative of some thirty-two plays and nineteen films that Kazan directed between 1931 and 1977. The commentaries on the theatrical productions seem particularly tedious, not just because they are of less interest to cineastes but because, as Schickel acknowledges, the plays "lie mainly unread in libraries. Movies, treated so contemptuously at the time by haughty Broadway, are different. Because they are physical products, immutable reels of celluloid, they persist" (117). This admission is problematic, however, since eighty consecutive pages are largely taken up with the doomed project of revivifying these theatrical relics.

Kazan's professional career, which spanned more than six decades beginning with The Group Theatre in 1932 and ending with his seventh novel in 1994, moved, with some overlap, from stage to screen to book. "He remained ever the Group's child," Schickel explains. "He liked explanations, political and psychological, for whatever issues he explored" (282). Nevertheless, he resisted the Communist Party's growing influence over the Group and co-founded (with Strasberg) the Actors Studio, which brought about a revolution of its own in the performances of its adherents. For Kazan, directing became not a matter of coaching actors but, in his own words, "turning psychological events into behavior" (21). His conviction that good acting could be discovered in unlikely sources led him to cast non-professionals (*Boomerang!* [1947]), newcomers (*America America* [1963]), and "performers from the lighter realms of show business" (77) like Zero Mostel (*Panic in the Streets* [1950]), Andy Griffith (*A Face in the Crowd* [1957]), and Burl Ives (*East of Eden* [1954]). The enduring influence of Kazan's filmmaking was embodied by Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, who accompanied him on the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion stage to receive his honorary Academy Award in his final public appearance.

Schickel describes Kazan's life as "a typical immigrant's story . . . burying a profound anger under an air of eager accommodation" (1–2), what the director himself called his "Anatolian smile." For all his success, he remained, in his own mind, a perpetual outsider, searching for acceptance, susceptible to and disillusioned by proletarian ideology, yet never abandoning his solidarity with plain people. Despite his sychophancy and ruthlessness, Schickel insists on Kazan's "emotional intelligence. He had a gift for reading people—their needs, their hidden motives, their unspoken desires—and for manipulating them, often without their quite realizing what was going on, that amounted to a genius" (253). Kazan's family life—three marriages, multiple affairs, four children in wedlock, one outside of marriage—receives little attention, epitomized by the single paragraph in which Schickel notes the end of his long marriage to Molly Thatcher Kazan and the beginning of his adulterous relationship with Barbara Loden, who would become his second wife. The obvious gaps in depicting Kazan's personal life (at one point, while describing the presence of his children on the set of *Panic in the Streets*, the author abruptly informs us that "he had four by this time" [210]) are regrettable not because of the missed opportunities for gossip—the autobiography provides more than enough detail about Constance Dowling, Marilyn Monroe, Loden, and others—but because Schickel neglects the human qualities of a man frequently accused of personal betrayal and moral compromise.

At the center of the book, of course, lies the HUAC hearings in April, 1952. Schickel attempts to contextualize Kazan's appearance as a friendly witness: "In the 1950s, with the cold war at its height, there were many who accepted his testimony as an intelligible and realistic action" (xv); only after the political "sea change" of the late 1960s was he more widely vilified. This may be true, but it is hard not to cringe at the later assessment that "the testimony of Kazan and the other friendly witnesses, both morally and politically speaking, harmed no one but themselves" (266) or that "the blacklist was only occasionally a tragedy; mostly it was an inconvenience" (449). Would Schickel himself find it "inconvenient" to be pseudonymously reviewing for *Film Quarterly* instead of *Time*? He seems on much firmer moral ground when he deconstructs the self-serving, less-than-candid statements of Rod Steiger and Arthur Miller (in *Timebends*) or when he defends those who, like Kazan, cooperated with the committee. For Schickel, HUAC witnesses were faced with this choice: "betrayal of long-lost colleagues who had, at one time, betrayed you; or abandonment of your present life and career for people you no longer respect, like, or share the values of" (264). Given this dilemma, Kazan's decision to name names—all of which were previously known—may be defensible; his decision two days later to take out an ad in the *New York Times* justifying his action was certainly not. Schickel concedes it "was a huge mistake" (270), although he attributes the idea and the language largely to Molly Kazan. Whatever the merits of its survey of the historical circumstances and defense of Kazan's position, these pages at the beginning, middle, and end of the biography are undoubtedly the most engaging.

Aside from occasional questions raised by missing information (why did Kazan not direct the film version of his stage success, *Tea and Sympathy*?) or seemingly irrelevant digressions (was Willy Loman Jewish?), Schickel's biography suffers from recurrent ambivalence about critical issues in the films themselves. Thus, the author concludes a discussion of Peter Biskind's well-known essay on *On the Waterfront* (1954) that describes the director as a "complexity monger" with this confusing appraisal: "This seems to me an extraordinarily simple-minded reading of both the man and this film. Yet it is also a truthful one, in its way" (309). Similarly, he analyzes "a powerful scene [in *East of Eden*] that Kazan shot in slightly raked angles, which may or may not have been a good idea" (321). And evaluating a note in which Kazan considers playing the mother in *Splendor in the Grass* as a version of Paula Strasberg, Schickel decides, "It is possibly a great idea. Or possibly a very bad one, but it is, in any event, not one that went anywhere" (375). These lapses in decisiveness both contrast with the fervent defense of Kazan's political position and highlight the essential derivativeness of most of this biography. At twice the length, Kazan's autobiography is a quicker, more entertaining—and revealing—read. © 2007 Lloyd Michaels

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MEGAN WILLIAMS

The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions
ed. Annette Davison and Erica Sheen

Anyone who has ever tried to discuss David Lynch's work with an air of knowledge, be it in the classroom or among friends, knows how much these films make us squirm—first as viewers, and then as critics. As viewers, we struggle to name the unease his films engender. To an extent, Lynch turns us all into versions of Jeffrey Beaumont in *Blue Velvet* (1986). Caught in Dorothy Vallens's closet, we are trapped between our horror and our attraction to the scenes unfolding on the screen before us.

Readable and illuminating, *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions* is an outstanding collection that helps the reader to remedy the difficulty of talking about Lynch. There are twelve essays and, mostly without theoretical jargon, each one places Lynch's work in a new cultural context. While the book follows the chronology of Lynch's works, the essays address diverse subjects and are not organized around a single theme. They are, however, linked by their recognition of the need to move the discussion of Lynch's work beyond the debate over postmodernism and to locate it in relation to Hollywood. The book's third chapter, "Going into Strange Worlds: David Lynch, *Dune*, and New Hollywood" by co-editor Erica Sheen, is particularly notable in this endeavor, focusing as it does on production issues instead of questions of representation. In particular, Sheen reads the failure of *Dune* (1984) in the context of Lynch's problematical relationship with the film industry—arguing that the very length of this film reveals Lynch's attraction to different media and to the "endless flow" of television. In "*Blue Velvet* Underground: David Lynch's Post-Punk Poetics," Nicholas Rombes seconds Sheen's call to move beyond the debate over postmodernism by situating *Blue Velvet* in the context of the punk movement. Rombes contends that Lynch's films, like punk music, signal a "beyond postmodern" sensibility that relies upon old styles and genres to create unstable narratives (72); unlike postmodern texts, however, these "new" narratives do not use irony or parody or intend to demystify the styles and genres they include.

Two essays provide explanations for the viewer's dual attraction and repulsion. In "*Twin Peaks*, Weak Language and the Resurrection of Affect," Sheli Ayers discusses how the series uses secular allegory to break down the barriers between film and television and to open a unique site of identification for the viewer. Similarly, Greg Hainge's "Weird or Loopy? Specular Spaces, Feedback, and Artifice in *Lost Highway*'s Aesthetics of Sensation" maintains that the very artificiality and self-referential nature of Lynch's films ironically allow the viewer to connect with his work. Many of the essays here note Lynch's background in the fine arts; Greg Hainge compares Lynch's films to Francis Bacon's paintings, while Anne Jerslev's "Beyond Boundaries: David Lynch's *Lost Highway*" discusses how texture and space operate in his films to destroy the expectations of classical Hollywood narrative.

Although all the essays in this collection attempt to name the discomfort one feels watching Lynch's work, two focus on that most disturbing of characters: *Blue Velvet*'s Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper). Sam Ishii-Gonzales examines the primal scene in *Blue Velvet* in light of Freudian analysis, while Jana Evans Braziel creates a new theoretical term, "femm(e)rotics," to discuss the representations of women in *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart* (1990), and *Lost Highway* (1997). Both Gonzales's and Braziel's essays call the viewer's attention to components of these films that we might otherwise have missed, yet they are ultimately disappointing. Gonzales's

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ed. Annette Davison and Erica Sheen

Anyone who has ever tried to discuss David Lynch's work with an air of knowledge, be it in the classroom or among friends, knows how much these films make us squirm—first as viewers, and then as critics. As viewers, we struggle to name the unease his films engender. To an extent, Lynch turns us all into versions of Jeffrey Beaumont in *Blue Velvet* (1986). Caught in Dorothy Vallens's closet, we are trapped between our horror and our attraction to the scenes unfolding on the screen before us.

Readable and illuminating, *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions* is an outstanding collection that helps the reader to remedy the difficulty of talking about Lynch. There are twelve essays and, mostly without theoretical jargon, each one places Lynch's work in a new cultural context. While the book follows the chronology of Lynch's works, the essays address diverse subjects and are not organized around a single theme. They are, however, linked by their recognition of the need to move the discussion of Lynch's work beyond the debate over postmodernism and to locate it in relation to Hollywood. The book's third chapter, "Going into Strange Worlds: David Lynch, *Dune*, and New Hollywood" by co-editor Erica Sheen, is particularly notable in this endeavor, focusing as it does on production issues instead of questions of representation. In particular, Sheen reads the failure of *Dune* (1984) in the context of Lynch's problematical relationship with the film industry—arguing that the very length of this film reveals Lynch's attraction to different media and to the "endless flow" of television. In "*Blue Velvet* Underground: David Lynch's Post-Punk Poetics," Nicholas Rombes seconds Sheen's call to move beyond the debate over postmodernism by situating *Blue Velvet* in the context of the punk movement. Rombes contends that Lynch's films, like punk music, signal a "beyond postmodern" sensibility that relies upon old styles and genres to create unstable narratives (72); unlike postmodern texts, however, these "new" narratives do not use irony or parody or intend to demystify the styles and genres they include.

Two essays provide explanations for the viewer's dual attraction and repulsion. In "*Twin Peaks*, Weak Language and the Resurrection of Affect," Sheli Ayers discusses how the series uses secular allegory to break down the barriers between film and television and to open a unique site of identification for the viewer. Similarly, Greg Hainge's "Weird or Loopy? Specular Spaces, Feedback, and Artifice in *Lost Highway*'s Aesthetics of Sensation" maintains that the very artificiality and self-referential nature of Lynch's films ironically allow the viewer to connect with his work. Many of the essays here note Lynch's background in the fine arts; Greg Hainge compares Lynch's films to Francis Bacon's paintings, while Anne Jerslev's "Beyond Boundaries: David Lynch's *Lost Highway*" discusses how texture and space operate in his films to destroy the expectations of classical Hollywood narrative.

Although all the essays in this collection attempt to name the discomfort one feels watching Lynch's work, two focus on that most disturbing of characters: *Blue Velvet*'s Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper). Sam Ishii-Gonzales examines the primal scene in *Blue Velvet* in light of Freudian analysis, while Jana Evans Braziel creates a new theoretical term, "femm(e)rotics," to discuss the representations of women in *Blue Velvet*, *Wild at Heart* (1990), and *Lost Highway* (1997). Both Gonzales's and Braziel's essays call the viewer's attention to components of these films that we might otherwise have missed, yet they are ultimately disappointing. Gonzales's

psychoanalytic framework feels far-removed and inadequate to describe the shock of Frank Booth. Braziel's femm(e)rotics posits that Lynch's films contain a radical refiguring of femininity that "displaces it from its traditional and exclusive relation to female bodies and opens new sites for bodily pleasures, desires, and identifications" (111). Braziel finds this new femininity in Lynch's depictions of female corpulence and in the male femininity embodied by Ben (Dean Stockwell) and Jeffrey (Kyle MacLachlan) in *Blue Velvet*. Both Ishii-Gonzales's and Braziel's essays take issues deserving book-length analysis and condense them into single chapters. This is particularly true of Braziel's essay. By arguing that Lynch rethinks femininity as "artifice, surface, and orifice" (111), she returns Lynch to the very essentialism she says he refutes. After all, the idea of woman as excess is not new. Lynch might focus on corpulence and male femininity, but since the Renaissance, women have been represented as overflowing, leaky vessels. Even if Braziel's argument were to move beyond essentialism, as it very well might in a more extended analysis, it does not illuminate the disturbing ways that gender operates in a character like Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini)—it does not, in short, answer the student who recently raised her hand during a discussion of *Blue Velvet*'s primal scene to demand, with disgust, "do we really need to watch this scene again?"

Several of the essays in this volume are remarkable for their ability to clarify Lynch's work and to return the viewer to a more complete understanding of the structures of classical Hollywood narrative. Essays by Steven Jay Schneider, Joe Kember, Annette Davison, and Martha P. Nochimson give this collection its strength. "The Essential Evil in/of *Eraserhead* (or, Lynch to the Contrary)" by Schneider begins the volume with a discussion of how the perception of Lynch as an auteur director is "naive" (6). Against those who believe that Lynch's films operate in a "cinematic vacuum" without precedent (ibid.), Schneider argues that *Eraserhead* (1977) calls upon the conventions of the horror film to create extreme discomfort in the viewer. At the end of Schneider's essay, while the disquiet that accompanies the images of *Eraserhead* might not have dissipated, at the very least the reader better understands how Lynch manipulates us to deliberately invoke anxiety. Although we might no longer see him as an "eccentric artiste" (ibid.), he remains an innovative director who brilliantly harnesses the rules of the horror genre.

Schneider's essay is followed by Joe Kember's "David Lynch and the Mug Shot: Facework in *The Elephant Man* and *The Straight Story*." Kember observes that Lynch's films often focus on "the ambivalence of the face" (20). In *The Elephant Man* (1980) and *The Straight Story* (1999), the face is no longer a site for viewer identification; without the ability to communicate emotion, it becomes an object that dramatizes the viewer's viewing practices and limitations.

In contrast to the majority of essays here that focus on the visual, Annette Davison's "'Up in Flames': Love, Control, and Collaboration in the Soundtrack to *Wild at Heart*" examines how Lynch uses sound to create a collaborative mode of production that stands outside Hollywood norms. As Davison notes, Lynch is famous for saying, "people call me a director, but I really think of myself as a soundman" (119). John Richardson's "*Laura* and *Twin Peaks*: Postmodern Parody and the Musical Reconstruction of the Absent Femme Fatale" is the other essay in the collection that recognizes the importance sound holds to an understanding of Lynch's cinema.

Nochimson's essay concludes this wonderful book. In "'All I Need is the Girl': The Life and Death of Creativity in *Mulholland Drive*," this renowned Lynch scholar contests that Lynch uses the figure of "the girl" to discuss what happens—in terms of the death of mass culture—when the creative moment is not allowed to occur in film. Although the collection's subtitle promises a discussion of both "American dreams" and "nightmare visions," as a whole it focuses more on the latter. Nochimson ends her essay by reminding us that Lynch's critique of Hollywood must be placed in the context of his innate "optimism" (179), but this prompt feels more like a postscript—a Hollywood ending in which we see Sandy's robins instead of the horror that lies beneath the surface. Nochimson ultimately asks us to believe that neither her chapter nor the collection as a whole has succumbed to Lynch's darkness. At one point, the collection quotes Lynch stating, "this is the way America is to me. There's a very innocent, naive quality to life, and there's a horror and a sickness as well" (65). Nochimson's contribution notwithstanding, the cumulative message of the essays in this volume has to do with the "sickness" at the base of Lynch's cinema.

A final note: the collection does not focus a great deal on America. The America that emerges here, in keeping with the suburbia of white picket fences that opens *Blue Velvet*, is not much larger than Hollywood. In these essays, America is all surface, a product with no clear referent or historical context. This volume does not fulfill completely the remit of its subtitle—that these twelve essays will focus, at least in part, on the United States as an actual country. These essays therefore perpetuate Lynch's own tendency to conflate space and time, creating a mythic not a specific America. © 2007 Megan Williams

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BOOK DATA Erica Sheen and Annette Davison (eds), *The Cinema of David Lynch: American Dreams, Nightmare Visions.* London: Wallflower Press, 2004. $70.00 cloth; $20.00 paper. 207 pages.

MARSHALL DEUTELBAUM

An Eye for Hitchcock by Murray Pomerance

In *An Eye for Hitchcock*, Murray Pomerance offers highly personal meditations on six of Hitchcock's later films: *I Confess* (1952), *Marnie* (1964), *North by Northwest* (1959), *Spellbound* (1945), *Torn Curtain* (1966), and *Vertigo* (1958). He has chosen to discuss them, he explains, "because these have carried me on fabulous journeys" (12). Rather than pretend to be objective, Pomerance revels in his subjective immersion in the films: "The essays were conceived, then, as homages, and in watching the films and writing about them my overwhelming desire was to see as much as possible of what had been put on the screen to see" (ibid.). Pomerance valorizes the way his personal experiences shape his perceptions, his way of seeing, allowing him to perceive the significance of moments ignored by other viewers: "one could be less idiosyncratic than I have been—many writers have—but I want to be true to the fact that these films are first and foremost experiences, and idiosyncratic ones" (11). This approach is reminiscent of connoisseurship, as when Pomerance declares "I have been true in these pages to what I have seen" (3), offering the personal quality of his statements as some kind of proof that they are valid about the films as well.

How can one assess such determined eccentricity? Pomerance's celebration of his subjectivity and certainty of its interpretive validity makes it impossible for me to write a traditional review of *An Eye for Hitchcock* that engages his arguments in any critical way. Pomerance follows a private, associational logic that accumulates ideas as his attention moves from one perception to another. Thus in what follows, I am more interested in analyzing his aims and methods than in assessing his specific claims about the films.

Not surprising considering that he is a sociologist, Pomerance's key argument in his meditations about these films is that they abound with hitherto unnoticed explorations of class hierarchy, couched in a variety of guises and references to what he terms "vital verticality": "We may be on the lookout for social scales in which powerlessness struggles under power; climbing; falling; precarious rest in gravity; architectures suggesting, and founded upon, upward thrust; camera movement in the vertical line, especially shooting from above and below; geographical upness and downness; the moral scale" (12). At times, however, instances of verticality Pomerance claims to find in a film are created more by the words he chooses to describe a scene than by the scene itself. For example, consider the often metaphoric falls in the following promise of his insights into *Vertigo*: "I will consider seven aspects of verticality in this film: the social class position of Gavin Elster, Scottie Ferguson's low status as an unattached male, San Francisco as the locus of a dropping narrative, the verticality of Madeleine's 'attempted suicide,' the fall into Judy Barton's performance experienced by Scottie and by us, the redwood forest and our fall into the past there, and the fall of resemblance from surface characters to actors underneath them" (226).

Pomerance's over-reliance on word choice to stake a claim can also be seen in his analysis of the auction scene in *North by Northwest*. Calling the scene "a particularly delicious invocation of verticality," Pomerance constructs the scene's verticality largely through the words he chooses to describe the purpose of the activities that take place on auction room's flat floor: "The auction is a steep one, in which various members of the *haute monde* wish to outbid one another—which is to say, ascend the economic ladder—for objects of great apparent value (appurtenances of high status). The very slight physical verticality—that the stage upon which the objects to be sold are first displayed is elevated; that the activity is generally organized around the objects elevated upon that stage—is a persistent visual code for the profound social verticality implicit in the action" (29). Where critics have focused upon Roger Thornhill's quick-witted gaucheries as simply a guise he adopts to escape the attack of the man positioned by Van Damm at the entrance of the auction room, before reaching the same conclusion, Pomerance follows the quoted passage with nine pages of close analysis in which he contends that Thornhill's gaffes highlight the ignorant pretensions of the bidders (i.e., their social verticality) gathered there. Pomerance, who seems to think he can intuit the motivations of even these peripheral characters, explains that the matron who calls Thornhill "a genuine idiot" is attempting by denouncing him "to maintain at all expense a bloated masque of effeteness and dignified reserve" (34). Furthermore, a philistine, she knows nothing about art; "she really has come to this place tonight not to discern but to be in the company of hollow, esteemed, imperceptive people, highly praised objects, and large sums of money" (ibid.). While these may be Pomerance's perceptions of auction bidders based upon his "experience of the world" as a sociologist, I suspect those who know the sequence will be surprised that he believes these peripheral characters merit such attention.

Readers may also be surprised by the scenes Pomerance identifies as the keys to the proper understanding of these films. The key sequence to an understanding of the meaning of *Spellbound*, he claims, is not the explanation of Ballantine's dream in and of itself, but the conversation between the

police detectives in Dr. Brulov's waiting room which highlights the impotence felt by a man held back (i.e., down) by his superior. This leads him to the startling claim that far from being admirable, the climactic presentation of the interpretation of Ballantine's dream is "a brutal portrait of a therapeutic assault by an artist whose intense sensitivity to . . . Freud did not extend to a fondness for the institutionalization of his ideas in the psychoanalytic establishment. That establishment, represented here by Brulov more than by Peterson, I think, is for Hitchcock the institutionalized studio system, Selznick International in particular, where, even with a love of the language and technique of film that has probably never been matched, Hitchcock found himself essentially solitary, uncomfortable, and outnumbered in the face of David Selznick's incessant, unyielding, and manipulative oversight" (89). Pomerance laid the groundwork for this assertion nearly thirty pages earlier when he suggested that Selznick "epitomized the active world-searching male to whom Hitchcock's 'virginity and innocence' would have to yield" (61). There is nothing in the intervening pages, however, to suggest that Pomerance would use this suggestion as the basis for interpreting *Spellbound*'s dramatic highpoint. Like the other chapters in *An Eye for Hitchcock*, the chapter follows an ambling, loosely associative logic.

Pomerance begins the chapter by citing Donald Spoto's description of Hitchcock's personality, links this to another writer's speculation that Hitchcock's personality was much like that of Henry James, and moves on to claim that Hitchcock would have been familiar with Freudian thought even though he had never been in analysis. At this point, Pomerance mentions Selznick's psychiatric experience, quickly summarizes the aim of analysis, and concludes the brief initial section of the chapter by saying that anyone familiar with *Spellbound* will recognize in that summary of the aim of analysis the film's surface plot. The next section of the chapter begins with a survey of the artistic luminaries of turn-of-the-century Vienna, whose world was based, he asserts, on "serious devotion to composition, carefully controlled illumination, and intensified use of materials—all qualities we can find in the underlying principles of Freudian psychoanalytic science and therapeutic endeavor, but also in the filmmaking practices of Alfred Hitchcock" (63). Having conflated Hitchcock and Freud, Pomerance immediately doubles back to identify, as only a connoisseur could, some moments in Hitchcock's later films that echo the hallmarks of the Viennese artists and intellectuals of the time. He begins the hyperbolic encomium with a cinematic comparison to the architecture of Josef Hoffmann by citing "*The Lady Vanishes* where the motion of the train is the motion of the film—the frame construction is Hoffmannesque. Or we can regard the subtlety of illumination in the visitation to the crofters in *The 39 Steps*—the evocation of the lighting is Klimtian. Or we can esteem the compositional use of depth-of-field and lens in the mountain murder of *Secret Agent*—the regard for lenses and settings, for the distant as the proximal, for the enormous contained in the momentary, smacks of Mahlerian orchestration. And always, Hitchcock's twisting, provocative, often hilarious, yet always serious mode of thought is like Wittgenstein's" (63). Although there is a logic of sorts to the succession of topics just described from the chapter's first six pages, its eccentric progression makes it impossible for a reader to gauge where it will next focus. In light of such a meandering progress, it is perfectly understandable, even unavoidable, for a reader to forget Selznick's psychoanalytic experience when—at the chapter's conclusion so many pages later—Pomerance counts the most on its remembrance to make his point.

While reading (and rereading) *An Eye for Hitchcock*, I never for a moment doubted Murray Pomerance's honesty or integrity. This is a study written in genuine devotion and admiration. Nevertheless, readers should be aware that its highly personal style offers many obstacles to an easy understanding of its ideas. © 2007 Marshall Deutelbaum

MARSHALL DEUTELBAUM is Professor Emeritus of English, Purdue University, and co-editor of *A Hitchcock Reader* (Iowa State Press, 1986).

BOOK DATA Murray Pomerance, *An Eye for Hitchcock*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004. $22.95 paper. 306 pages.

R. L. RUTSKY

Joel and Ethan Coen by R. Barton Palmer

Although it treats its subjects with an admiring, auteur-oriented gaze, R. Barton Palmer's study of the films of Joel and Ethan Coen thankfully avoids the tendency toward hagiography of some auteurist studies. Instead, Palmer adds a welcome degree of complexity by focusing on crucial issues of postmodern film authorship and so-called independent filmmaking. Indeed, in this context, the Coens' films offer an interesting case study: at once, as Palmer notes, independent *and* commercial—and examplars of postmodern pastiche that nonetheless remain open to auteur-based analysis. In Palmer's analysis, the Coen brothers' films "bear an obvious imprint that is personal, at least in the sense that it may be traced across their various films and made the proper object of a critical analysis" (2). Yet, at the

police detectives in Dr. Brulov's waiting room which highlights the impotence felt by a man held back (i.e., down) by his superior. This leads him to the startling claim that far from being admirable, the climactic presentation of the interpretation of Ballantine's dream is "a brutal portrait of a therapeutic assault by an artist whose intense sensitivity to . . . Freud did not extend to a fondness for the institutionalization of his ideas in the psychoanalytic establishment. That establishment, represented here by Brulov more than by Peterson, I think, is for Hitchcock the institutionalized studio system, Selznick International in particular, where, even with a love of the language and technique of film that has probably never been matched, Hitchcock found himself essentially solitary, uncomfortable, and outnumbered in the face of David Selznick's incessant, unyielding, and manipulative oversight" (89). Pomerance laid the groundwork for this assertion nearly thirty pages earlier when he suggested that Selznick "epitomized the active world-searching male to whom Hitchcock's 'virginity and innocence' would have to yield" (61). There is nothing in the intervening pages, however, to suggest that Pomerance would use this suggestion as the basis for interpreting *Spellbound*'s dramatic highpoint. Like the other chapters in *An Eye for Hitchcock*, the chapter follows an ambling, loosely associative logic.

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same time, Palmer argues, their films are "characterized by a calculated dispersal of energies" (ibid.). In this sense, the Coens do not easily fit the "position of the classical auteur, who is generally understood as a unifying force imposing a personal and singular design on a variety of materials" (4). Indeed, Palmer finds that "the most predictable aspect of their filmmaking is its unpredictability, its quirky and surprising engagement not only with Hollywood and American culture, but also with authors ranging from Homer to Clifford Odets to James M. Cain" (5).

Palmer suggests, then, that the quirkiness of the Coen brothers' films is closely related to the eclectic—or "dispersed"—mélange of elements and references that appear in them. Their films "contain networks of allusions to other works both literary and cinematic" (57). In other words, the Coens' work borrows and mixes bits and pieces from a variety of high and popular cultural sources (including many film references). These playful appropriations often give their films the effect of pastiche. This mixing of different elements also explains, at least in part, why their work has been described—at times derisively—as postmodern. As Palmer observes, the artistic practice of borrowing, "often termed *bricolage*, or scavenging, is typically postmodern" (ibid.).

Examining the postmodern aspects of the Coen films allows Palmer to make a number of effective points. Noting, for example, that reactions to the Coen brothers' work have often been sharply divided, he convincingly argues that critical opinion has diverged in line with critics' views of the postmodernist tendencies of their films. Thus, detractors have commonly viewed the Coen films as "pointless deconstructions or hybridizations of familiar generic categories" that are "all flash and no substance" (45). In Palmer's summary of this critical point of view, such films display "the hallmark of postmodernism": "They offer no engagement with the 'real' or with 'history,' but simply make a string of allusions that entertain the knowledgeable, if intellectually shallow, aficionados of film in the younger generation" (ibid.). Palmer agrees that "the subjects of [the Coens' films] are never 'the real' but rather other texts and genres" (57), but points out that this intertextual hybridity need not be seen merely as superficial. Indeed, he implies that such critical differences of opinion may be largely generational, with older critics inclined toward "nostalgia for the 'solidity' of modernism" (45). For his part, Palmer argues that the Coens' films are "worthy because they continue (on a smaller scale and with a cynicism and distanced tone that are a part and parcel of the postmodernist sensibility) the critique of American society and its national cinema begun during the Hollywood Renaissance" (44).

Perhaps the most intriguing area of Palmer's study lies in its efforts to negotiate between auteurist and postmodern perspectives. Palmer recognizes that the postmodern tendency toward bricolage, hybridity, and intertextuality brings into question conventional notions of the auteur's originality, autonomy, and unifying perspective. This shift in perspective is not simply a matter of an aesthetic of hybridity or pastiche replacing artistic "originality." Rather, it involves rethinking the very idea of the autonomous subject. Thus authorship, like subjectivity more generally, comes to be seen as inevitably implicated in larger cultural networks and processes, rather than straightforwardly autonomous. As Palmer notes, the postmodern, recombinant sensibility of the Coen brothers' films can be seen as representing a shift from conventional auteurism's notion of an autonomous and singular personal vision. Not only do their films borrow liberally from a range of cultural sources, but often involve a mixture of genres, styles, and tones, from the expressive excess of *Barton Fink* (1991) to the minimalist shadings of *Fargo* (1996). This "dispersed" quality suggests an authorship that has itself become diffused, immersed within the network of cultural associations that provide its materials. Palmer in fact reads the brothers' reticence to play the public role of "auteurs" as indicative of a postmodern authorial mode.

This shift in the idea of authorship also raises interesting questions about independent filmmaking, although Palmer does not explicitly challenge the supposed autonomy of the independent filmmaker. He acknowledges, in fact, the artistic and financial independence that the Coens have been able to maintain over their films. Yet, he also argues that the Coens' films continually negotiate "between the commercial, on the one hand, and 'independent artistry,' on the other" (30), and he links their blend of "commercial/independent" filmmaking, once again, to postmodernism's hybrid borrowings from popular and commercial culture. Implicitly, then, Palmer's reading of the Coens' filmmaking brings into question the simplistic opposition of artistic independence to commercial conventionality, which often underlies the idea of independent filmmaking.

Yet, as Palmer observes, the Coen brothers' films do display, if not exactly a recognizable style, then a recognizable sensibility or attitude. In this sense, the Coens' films do "call for an auteurist approach," which Palmer proceeds to deliver in analyses of what he sees as their seven most significant films to date. Individual chapters are

devoted to *Blood Simple* (1984), *Fargo*, and *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001), while *Raising Arizona* (1987), *Barton Fink*, *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994), *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) are treated in chapters focused on the relation of art and mass culture (explicitly thematized in *Barton Fink*) and the Coens' reuse and revision of classic Hollywood filmmakers, particularly Preston Sturges and Frank Capra. Palmer's dismissal of *Miller's Crossing* (1990), *The Big Lebowski* (1998), and *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003) as adding "little of importance to the general account offered here" (6) seems rather arbitrary, but certainly does not invalidate his insightful readings of the films he does cover. One of the few flaws of Palmer's analysis, however, is that he tends to give less weight to the Coens' explicitly comedic films, even describing *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* as "their least serious" film (132), a sentiment that seems oddly incongruent with the postmodernism emphasized elsewhere in the book. Overall, Palmer's study provides useful, clearly written analyses that will satisfy those interested in an auteurist examination of the Coens' films, and also those interested in rethinking auteurism in the light of postmodernism. ©2007 R. L. Rutsky

R. L. RUTSKY teaches at San Francisco State University and is the author of *High Techne: Art and Technology from the Machine Aesthetic to the Posthuman* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), and co-editor of *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader* (Norton, 2006).

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HISTORY

CHARLIE KEIL

Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory by Simon Popple and Joe Kember

We have long been in need of a serviceable overview of early cinema, and Simon Popple and Joe Kember have now provided one in *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory*. Readers unfamiliar with the period will welcome this book and its concise, informed account of pertinent historical developments and scholarly approaches; those already knowledgeable about early cinema will still find much of value, though they may question whether the restrictive format the aptly named Short Cuts series imposes is the ideal vehicle for providing a single volume on such an expansive topic.

Aside from their opening chapter, which offers a compressed year-by-year summary of the notable industrial and technological occurrences between 1895 and 1914, Popple and Kember largely eschew a chronological approach in favor of highlighting selected topics. (In the chapters that follow, the authors survey and critique currents in early cinema scholarship; enumerate uses to which cinema was put in its early stages; examine exhibition and reception during the period; and, finally, chart the formal development of the medium until the advent of features.) Choosing topics over timelines gives the authors the advantage of pursuing those subjects which interest them most, but it also means the book focuses on early cinema's earliest years, tending more toward "factory gate" than "dream factory," thereby leaving the developmental issues implied by "from" somewhat underexplored.

The book's initial claims regarding cinema's status as a "leading form of visual culture among rapidly expanding global media" are complicated by the authors' decision to rely primarily on examples from early British cinema as a foundation for broader claims about film during these years. For North American readers in particular, this will serve as a refreshing alternative to scholarly tendencies which promote the American experience of early cinema as normative. However, substituting one nation's cinema for another fails to address broader questions such as the ultimate relevance of national boundaries during this period. Moreover, as the authors concede, the British film industry went into decline long before the drastic redrawing of the global film marketplace occasioned by World War I, and so one requires a far more precise account of which elements drawn from England's history of early cinema are truly exemplary and which are *sui generis*. Overall, the study would benefit from more attempts to present the developments evident during cinema's first years as a series of parallel events spreading across a variety of countries, especially if the authors wish to demonstrate how cinema came to function as a "worldwide institution."

Popple and Kember are on firmer ground when they employ their own research as the basis for numerous compelling "microhistorical" case studies, such as contemporaneous reactions to the sham actualities prevalent during the early 1900s. Other highlights include the study of the intertextual links among film, advertising, and news coverage, as the authors examine how cinema represented the Boer War to British audiences; a consideration of the way cinema combined the realms of science and magic within its early presentational strategies; and distinctive accounts of both itinerant

devoted to *Blood Simple* (1984), *Fargo*, and *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001), while *Raising Arizona* (1987), *Barton Fink*, *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994), *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) are treated in chapters focused on the relation of art and mass culture (explicitly thematized in *Barton Fink*) and the Coens' reuse and revision of classic Hollywood filmmakers, particularly Preston Sturges and Frank Capra. Palmer's dismissal of *Miller's Crossing* (1990), *The Big Lebowski* (1998), and *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003) as adding "little of importance to the general account offered here" (6) seems rather arbitrary, but certainly does not invalidate his insightful readings of the films he does cover. One of the few flaws of Palmer's analysis, however, is that he tends to give less weight to the Coens' explicitly comedic films, even describing *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* as "their least serious" film (132), a sentiment that seems oddly incongruent with the postmodernism emphasized elsewhere in the book. Overall, Palmer's study provides useful, clearly written analyses that will satisfy those interested in an auteurist examination of the Coens' films, and also those interested in rethinking auteurism in the light of postmodernism. ©2007 R. L. Rutsky

R. L. RUTSKY teaches at San Francisco State University and is the author of *High Techne: Art and Technology from the Machine Aesthetic to the Posthuman* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), and co-editor of *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader* (Norton, 2006).

BOOK DATA R. Barton Palmer, *Joel and Ethan Coen.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004. $35.00 cloth; $16.95 paper. 208 pages.

HISTORY

CHARLIE KEIL

Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory by Simon Popple and Joe Kember

We have long been in need of a serviceable overview of early cinema, and Simon Popple and Joe Kember have now provided one in *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory*. Readers unfamiliar with the period will welcome this book and its concise, informed account of pertinent historical developments and scholarly approaches; those already knowledgeable about early cinema will still find much of value, though they may question whether the restrictive format the aptly named Short Cuts series imposes is the ideal vehicle for providing a single volume on such an expansive topic.

Aside from their opening chapter, which offers a compressed year-by-year summary of the notable industrial and technological occurrences between 1895 and 1914, Popple and Kember largely eschew a chronological approach in favor of highlighting selected topics. (In the chapters that follow, the authors survey and critique currents in early cinema scholarship; enumerate uses to which cinema was put in its early stages; examine exhibition and reception during the period; and, finally, chart the formal development of the medium until the advent of features.) Choosing topics over timelines gives the authors the advantage of pursuing those subjects which interest them most, but it also means the book focuses on early cinema's earliest years, tending more toward "factory gate" than "dream factory," thereby leaving the developmental issues implied by "from" somewhat underexplored.

The book's initial claims regarding cinema's status as a "leading form of visual culture among rapidly expanding global media" are complicated by the authors' decision to rely primarily on examples from early British cinema as a foundation for broader claims about film during these years. For North American readers in particular, this will serve as a refreshing alternative to scholarly tendencies which promote the American experience of early cinema as normative. However, substituting one nation's cinema for another fails to address broader questions such as the ultimate relevance of national boundaries during this period. Moreover, as the authors concede, the British film industry went into decline long before the drastic redrawing of the global film marketplace occasioned by World War I, and so one requires a far more precise account of which elements drawn from England's history of early cinema are truly exemplary and which are *sui generis*. Overall, the study would benefit from more attempts to present the developments evident during cinema's first years as a series of parallel events spreading across a variety of countries, especially if the authors wish to demonstrate how cinema came to function as a "worldwide institution."

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exhibitors and showmen. The authors also make fine use of individual films at selected moments, even when all that might remain of a film is its catalogue description; such is the case with Pathé's 1903 *A Cinematograph Show*, the analysis of which becomes the springboard for a wider-ranging discussion of exhibition contexts.

In these sections, through their own practice, Popple and Kember demonstrate the virtues of critical self-awareness in historiographical method that they champion as a hallmark of much early cinema scholarship in the book's second chapter. Even so, one regrets that they could not make more of an effort to consistently incorporate recent scholarship into the coverage of the topics they have selected. Whether these omissions are a function of the volume's compactness or the aforementioned British bias, one is not sure, but collectively they qualify the book's reliability as a guide to the "key academic approaches to the subject": the discussion of early cinema and regulation neglects to take account of Lee Grieveson's groundbreaking work, while a section devoted to suffragette films makes no mention of Shelley Stamp's signal contribution to this area of study. (The latter oversight is indicative of the book's tendency to give short shrift to questions of early cinema and gender, which has produced some of the field's most noteworthy scholarship.) And while the authors predictably make mention of the cinema of attractions, they fail to enlist Tom Gunning's equally crucial notion of spectatorial (in)credulity when speaking of the "sophistication" of early cinema audiences' viewing practices. (I might add that the term "sophisticated" is both overused and underexamined in this context, emerging more as an assertion than a measured assessment.)

We should applaud Popple and Kember for undertaking the necessary task of providing a manageable and lucid guide to the study of early cinema, one that will undoubtedly prove handy for undergraduates and their instructors. But ultimately, the authors are undone by the mandate that they contain their topic to a mere 120 pages. In its very brevity, *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory* proves the richness of the subject at hand defies such attempts at summarization, no matter how admirably executed. © 2007 Charlie Keil

CHARLIE KEIL is Director of the Cinema Studies Institute and Associate Professor in the History Department at the University of Toronto, and author of *Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907–1913* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).

BOOK DATA Simon Popple and Joe Kember, *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory*. London: Wallflower Press, 2004. $20.00 paper. 136 pages.

GERALD SIM

Product Placement in Hollywood Films: A History by Kerry Segrave

Kerry Segrave's book is not the first work on the subject of Hollywood product placement; it follows on from Mark Crispin Miller's 1990 essay "Hollywood: The Ad" in *Atlantic Monthly*, Sam Turcotte's *Gimme A Bud! The Feature Film Product Placement Industry* (MA thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1995), and Janet Wasko's brief but cogent overview of the practice in *How Hollywood Works* (Sage Publications, 2003). There are also educational projects that aim to develop public media literacy, including the Media Education Foundation's documentary *Behind the Screens* (2000), PBS's *Frontline* edition on contemporary advertising, "The Persuaders" (2003) and the website www.brandhype.org.

The historical backdrop for these studies is economic. No one would claim that Hollywood was ever untethered to external commercial interests. Nevertheless, critics like Wasko still mainly position product placement in the present era of ubiquitous commercialism, industrial deregulation, and corporate mergers. The films in question therefore are almost exclusively the Hollywood blockbusters of the last twenty-five years. That emphasis is certainly understandable because the Hollywood film industry as it currently exists is more intricately tied to Wall Street and Madison Avenue, more vertically integrated, and sustains a mode of production that is more capital intensive than at any point in its history. The latter point is doubly crucial because film projects are increasingly dependent on product placement deals that can allay both production and advertising costs.

Product Placement in Hollywood Films extends significantly beyond the blockbuster period. The book's straightforward chronology in fact begins with a consideration of the silent era, when slide ads and industrial films represented the earliest introduction of advertising to cinema. Although these artifacts would seem to be distinct from the more familiar method of surreptitiously inserting products and brand names into films, they are important precursors to advertising shorts. These one-reel ads that were similar in length and content to the entertainment features at the time are the first textual conflation of narrative and advertising. Segrave links product placement with other forms of cinema advertising, adopting a somewhat different approach from the current tendency to associate it with merchandizing and other tie-ins

Segrave adopts a research methodology that is arduous but usually worthwhile. The bibliography is a carefully

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Segrave adopts a research methodology that is arduous but usually worthwhile. The bibliography is a carefully

assembled and extensive list of sources from the entertainment and advertising trade press. The presentation of industrial discourse results in a vivid picture of the relationship in Hollywood among media, manufacturing and marketing interests. Although one should not presume that the trade press contains greater empirical truth, this form of research commonly lends specificity to often overly broad descriptions of media economics more common in academic Film Studies. The density of information in the book could have been offset with chapter subheadings or lengthier introductions, but it helps that Segrave's prose is precise and cogent throughout.

Product Placement in Hollywood Films, in other words, evidences a particularly long and continuous interaction between the motion picture and advertising businesses, including the executive decisions behind specific deals. The book's concomitant focus on the movie and advertising industries is also interesting because mass entertainment and mass marketing were not born far apart. The author reveals an almost century-long evolution of the two enterprises, charting their individual growth as well as the negotiation of their relationship. Along the way, both film and marketing executives are continually quoted as expressing uncertainty over what that relationship should be. Concern existed at very high levels in industry about how the public would react to the encroachment of commercial advertising on their experience of film texts.

It is clear however that any form of public outrage is now a thing of the past—a transformation that is the most intriguing thing about the whole matter. Through its comedic parodies Hollywood now often mocks its own habit of product placement; *Wayne's World* (1992) is a famous and frequently cited example. That the critique can be so comfortably reduced to a punchline is suggestive. What does it mean when ideology no longer needs to hide itself from an acquiescent public? Segrave devotes a chapter to the topic under the alluring title, "Television Ads Condition Filmgoers to Accept Commercials," but mostly repeats the claims expressed in the advertising trade press without a substantive explanation of how that conditioning takes place. To date, a more definitive statement on the matter has not been crafted, but I suspect that it would touch on notions of postmodern subjectivity. The book's lack of analysis in this regard points to Segrave's complete reliance on a specific type of source.

Other critical writings on product placement disclose a palpable undercurrent of anxiety—a sense of helpless frustration with the power of a Culture Industry growing ever larger and stronger, seeming to have completely validated the Frankfurt School's theses on mass culture. For example, Wasko's *How Hollywood Works* presents product placement as an advanced form of profit strategy. "The Persuaders" portrays it as the marketing response to technologies like digital video recorders able to delete commercial segments. Sophisticated marketers seem to have every answer, even to advertising fatigue and an increasingly media-savvy audience. Furthermore, permeating textual boundaries is considered—rightfully—one of the final steps in commodifying cultural production. Mourning the death of artistic autonomy or integrity in Hollywood films, *Behind the Screens* compares contemporary Hollywood films with the industry's output during the 1970s, drawing on the popular opposition of art versus industry to harken back to a period when the auteurs of New Hollywood supposedly thrived, or at least enjoyed greater creative liberty.

Product Placement in Hollywood Films avoids that sort of nostalgia by way of a detached, methodical exposition that rarely attends to the films themselves. Of all writers on product placement, Miller provides the most informative textual analyses and is persuasive in his interpretation of how brand names and placed products function in various films' narrative and mise-en-scène. Segrave does the opposite and rarely scrutinizes the films themselves. By doing so he implicitly defines them as pure commodities, thus executing a faithful political-economy approach. For those who are sympathetic to that methodology, or for those look to perform audience research or textual analysis, this book will serve as a valuable resource.

Yet as a work of political economy, one has to wonder if it is feasible any more to restrict a study of this kind to only one medium. Segrave does occasionally discuss television and other media, but veers quickly back toward cinema. In contrast, other writers more preoccupied with the contemporary period tend to examine mass media as a whole. The concentration on cinema sets neat boundaries for a project of this length, but the size of the economic interactions that product placement points to, is the reason why a consideration across media is ultimately essential. © 2007 Gerald Sim

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BOOK DATA Kerry Segrave, *Product Placement: A History.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004. $39.95 paper. 244 pages.

EVE NG

Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film
By Adam Lowenstein

The horror genre has long attracted scholarly attention, but, as Adam Lowenstein observes, research has mostly not been positioned within discussions of national cinema. Such studies as have appeared have considered the character of horror films made in particular countries, such as James McRoy's *Japanese Horror Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), leaving unaddressed the extent to which such films can be read within, or how they challenge, existing theories of national cinema. Lowenstein's book, like Steven Schneider and Tony Williams's *Horror International* (Wayne State University Press, 2005) is, despite some stretches in analysis and inconsistent attention to audience, a welcome contribution that helps address this gap.

Lowenstein seeks to question two major binaries in Film Studies: between genre and art films, and between popular and national cinema. There is a tradition of defining national cinema in opposition to popular cinema, particularly that of Hollywood, and associating it with arthouse cinema and high culture (for example, see Philip Schlesinger's 2000 article "The Sociological Scope of 'National Cinema'"). Horror films have often been labeled as "trash," relying on gore and cheap thrills at the expense of character development and plot (that is, unless they happen to be the product of respected auteurs such as Hitchcock). In defense of the aesthetic and narrative conventions of horror films, Lowenstein critiques the privileging of realism in many of the New Wave movements. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's theory of literary allegory as involving a key moment of shock when one recognizes the past uniting with the present, Lowenstein invites us to look again at several films from France, Britain, Japan, Canada, and the U.S. which in the main were poorly received critically upon initial release. He reads the films as allegorically commenting on specific historical events and contexts relevant to the national identity of the country in which the film was made. The association of allegory with national cinema is not new, of course (having been discussed, for example, in Frederic Jameson's "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" from 1986), but the distinctiveness of Lowenstein's work lies in the films he has chosen to read in these terms.

Lowenstein's chapters on France and Japan present his most compelling analyses, with World War II and its aftermath the major historical traumas for both nations. In France, the Holocaust loomed enormously as the most horrifying of wartime atrocities, while the suffering and destruction wrought by the atomic bomb figured centrally in post-World War II Japan. One film that Lowenstein considers at length is Georges Franju's slaughterhouse documentary *Le Sang des bêtes* (1949), which Lowenstein sees as a masterful allegory for the Nazi death camps in Europe, not just because of the unmistakable parallels with mass killing, but also because the film's surrealist style, mingling scenes of industrial modernity with images of outmoded objects such as phonographs, "aims to disturb capitalist culture's mythic assumptions of a rationalized, evolving history (and modernity) by provoking the interpenetration of past and present" (22). Lowenstein also uses Franju's outsider status as a filmmaker to critique the notion of a self-evident national cinema, pointing out how the French New Wave was identified with French national cinema by academics and artists alike in the post-war period in ways that privileged particular subject matter and aesthetic conventions, as well as signaling an implicit embrace of modernization.

When it comes to Japanese cinema, Lowenstein closely examines Shindo Kaneto's 1964 film *Onibaba*, in which two fourteenth-century peasant women, a mother and her daughter-in-law, survive by killing wandering samurai and selling their armor. A mask from one murdered samurai, upon removal, reveals a horribly scarred face. It turns out that the mask is cursed: when the older woman dons it to frighten her daughter-in-law, it fuses with her face. When she takes it off, it has left her scarred in the same manner, a disfigurement that would for contemporary Japanese audiences have been immediately suggestive of radiation burns. Lowenstein also argues that the samurai's infecting of the old woman through the mask parallels a left-wing position where blame for the war and the suffering it brought for ordinary people was pinned on Japan's ruling classes and military elite. Yet what the film also shows is that the spreading of disfigurement is carried out by both man and woman, upper- and lower-class.

One thing to note about the scope of Lowenstein's book is that it does not always strictly stick, at least in an obvious way, to its title. Lowenstein discusses Nagisa Oshima's Japanese New Wave film *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), but not because it is a horror film as such. He is interested in this case because of comparisons with Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (1955), and because of the relevance of Oshima's subject matter—Japanese student radicals in the 1950s—to Japanese national identity. Also, while war and massacre are readily understood as historical traumas, the parallel "traumas" in Lowenstein's discussion of British and Canadian cinemas are, respectively, anxieties around class demarcations after the strategic deployment of ideologies of classlessness during World War II ("the people's war"), and the struggle to maintain an identity distinct from an American one together with the fractured character of Canadian identity along Anglo-French cultural lines. While

such cultural discourses and experiences no doubt figure importantly in constructions of national identity, they are of a different order of magnitude and character to death camps and nuclear annihilation. What holds the discussion together at certain points in *Shocking Representation*, then, are questions of cinema and national identity more generally rather than a strict consideration of horror and national trauma.

A more critical observation could be made with respect to Lowenstein's method of allegorical analysis. By definition, of course, allegory involves one thing standing for something else. Yet some parts of *Shocking Representation* may prompt us to consider how far such analysis can be pushed. For example, Lowenstein notes that *Onibaba* was set during the Warring States era in Japan when there were two courts, northern and southern. He interprets this as an allegory for the hybrid character of post-World War II government in Japan due to the continuing political influence of the U.S. But it is unclear to what extent this analysis is reflective of how the film's audiences understood the film. At various points in his discussion of other films, including Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972), and David Cronenberg's *Crash* (1996), Lowenstein also argues for less obviously allegorical associations between films and aspects of the sociopolitical context of a nation. This move adds complexity to the discussion at the same time as it dilutes its persuasiveness in relation to general (as opposed to scholarly) reception. In *Shocking Representation*, the audience is elusive, invoked as a key site of national imaginings, yet never present as anything other than an abstraction. Thus, the analysis sometimes oscillates uneasily between seeking to suggest how a film was received by national audiences and illustrating the interpretive possibilities available to a thoughtful scholar.

However, Lowenstein does not claim to be conducting audiences studies as opposed to theoretically grounded textual analysis. Of Franju's films, Lowenstein writes that they "remind us that splatter does not preclude (and sometimes may even encourage) an allegorical confrontation with the historical trauma of modernity" (53) and nationhood. This is a position that Lowenstein asks us to consider with respect to horror films more generally, and his book demonstrates that it is a theoretical direction well worth pursuing. © 2007 Eve Ng

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BOOK DATA Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. $64.50 cloth; $24.50 paper. 255 pages.

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VELVET BOXES AND RELIQUAIRES

"*The Case of Lena Smith* may be regarded as von Sternberg's most successful attempt at combining a story of meaning and purpose with his very original style" (287)—so wrote the late Curtis Harrington in 1947, little knowing that all prints of the 1929 Vienna-set silent melodrama had been destroyed. A messenger boy at Paramount in 1945, Harrington found his way into a screening on the lot. He recalled the film sixty years later to Alexander Horwath, the co-editor of the Austrian Film Museum's archaeological anthology: "It had extraordinary qualities! Of course I did not think it was a movie that would disappear" (31). This treasury of a book assembles archival and interpretative materials related to Sternberg's film: facsimiles of synopsis pages and a budget, posters, a promotional brochure, many beautiful stills, reviews from around the world, a tabulated and annotated scene-by-scene reconstruction, and (among others) a substantial article by Janet Bergstrom. The fragments can only suggest the disappeared whole, but they do so fascinatingly. *The Case of Lena Smith* is lost, as we euphemistically say, but in 2003 Komatsu Hiroshi of the Theater Museum of Waseda University, Tokyo, discovered—in an antiquarian shop in Dalian, Manchuria—four minutes of footage from the opening sequence, which was publicly screened at Bologna this past July.

The Austrian books are square in format and printed on a heavy vellum paper: they convey a sense both of scholarly weight and institutional authority, in contrast with the slim and haphazardly typeset booklets published by Anthology Film Archives (one of which is coincidentally concerned with Harrington). These volumes might have issued from a shoestring artists' collective. But Anthology is in fact a major institution of the film avant-garde, responsible not only for collecting and screening such work, but also for shaping its development and interpretation (notably in founding co-director P. Adams Sitney's 1974 book, *Visionary Film*).

Anthology was initially made possible by the benefaction of Jerome Hill, himself a filmmaker (best known for the 1965–71 *Film Portrait*), as well as an heir to railroad money. In *Perspectives on Jerome Hill and Anthology Film Archives*, we see Anthology taking shape. Hill was mentor and funder, but the key organizers were Jonas Mekas and Sitney. In the background was Stan Brakhage, but it is his role that struck me while reading the primary documents collected in the booklet. Brakhage was uncomfortable with any notion of institutional authority. He wrote Hill in September 1968, when "the academy theatre" was the working name for the organization: "it is . . . my hope that 'the academy' will disappoint some film movements sufficient to the creation of other 'academies' (so that it does NOT run the risk of being 'THE Academy Theatre' for any appreciable length of time)" (18). Sitney travelled to California at the end of 1968 to enlist West Coast support, reporting afterwards that "the Canyon Cinema Cooperative were immediately helpful to me, not because of the project (since its New York location stirs their suspicions), but because of the solidity of Brakhage's endorsement" (19). In spite of his hope for many academies, Brakhage's participation encouraged other filmmakers to come on board for this one. But the man himself soon opted out because he could not get his associates to agree to screening only those films that had been unanimously approved by a selection committee. Anthology all the same opened on 1 December 1970.

How was avant-garde work to be most effectively showcased? How would audiences respond? In *Crossroads: Avant-garde Film in Pittsburgh in the 1970s*, Robert A. Haller records that the first-ever mass walkout at the city's Museum of Art occurred during a screening of Ken Jacobs's *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* (1969). Of course, walkouts could be discouraged if it were made difficult to find an exit. Anthology's purpose-built Lafayette Street premises housed the Invisible Cinema, a sort of temple of film designed by another key figure, Peter Kubelka. Its walls were painted black. In her contribution to the Hill volume, Sky Sitney quotes a 1971 *San Francisco Sunday Examiner* piece: "The Invisible Cinema is a fascinating and eerie chamber, like no other movie house we've seen. I asked Mekas how it was possible for anyone to find his way into an all black theatre. He replied dryly that no latecomers are admitted. The house lights are extinguished immediately before the program starts" (37). Moreover, the seats in the auditorium were fitted with "hoods," partitioning off at eyeline-level one spectator from another. Peripheral movement was not to impede an intense, even disembodied attitude of contemplation of the work being screened. As Brakhage described it: "people really had a sense of drifting in a black space, a black box, and black ahead of you, nothing visible except the screen. So there you were in this velvet box

Film Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 1, pps 92–93, ISSN 0015-1386, electronic ISSN 1533-8630. © 2007 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website, http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintinfo.asp. DOI: 10.1525/FQ.2007.61.1.92

watching these jewels of films" (35). In this way Anthology encouraged a sort of reverence towards avant-garde film, as if it were a "gem-like flame" (to quote Pater), burning clear and hard on a screen confined by unbroken darkness in front of hooded, even priestly viewers.

Such reverence was never going to be sustainable. After Hill's death in 1972, Anthology could soon no longer afford the lease on the Lafayette Street building. More largely, the evolution of avant-garde film was in many instances increasingly a deconstruction, relocation, expansion, or critical interrogation of jewel-in-the-box cinematic presentation. The volumes on Peter Tscherkassky and Peter Mettler illustrate two variants of that opening-out. Tscherkassky began his practice working with super-8, moved to 16mm, then to a historiographical use of reworked 35mm cinema footage. Horwath remarks that this career "contains various suggestions for 'survival strategies' of (post-)avant-garde cinema: trying to connect with and follow tradition; looking for transitional solutions; outlining film theories and transcoding them into 'theory films'; moving into painful self-examination; celebrating the physicality of film; re-reading the history of the medium" (14). Tscherkassky is something of a scientist, calling super-8 "a microscope, making visible the inner life of images by entering through the skin of reality" (15). This methodology is to be contrasted with the one that Mettler—whose most notable work is the three-hour *Gambling, Gods and LSD* (2002), which Jerry White classifies as being in the tradition of Chris Marker's globetrotting film essays—describes with the neologism "Teledivinitry": "It's to do with sensing or divining currents of meaning through the use of technology" (47). This quasi-mystical approach shares the inquisitiveness of Tscherkassky's positivism but with a whole other dimension of spirituality. Whatever one might think of supposedly mystical filmmaking, it is interesting to learn that Mettler has recently branched out to undertake audiovisual performance events. Inspired by "synergistic events such as raves" (48), he has shown unedited footage from *Gambling, Gods and LSD* in the manner of a VJ (video jockey). As anyone who has attended raves will know, they have a strongly ritualistic quality, and thus the model they provide both contradicts and intersects with the gleaming Invisible Cinema screen viewed from cowled seats.

There is no fixed borderline dividing these variously self-reflexive and spiritual avant-gardes. Though it is marginal, reverence of a kind is not unknown to Tscherkassky: he notes that "Sitney's book *Visionary Film* … subsequently became a bible to me (more than 18 years later Sitney honored this tattered copy full of scribbled notes with a signed dedication—this transformed the bible into a relic)" (104).

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According to a similar logic of unexpected connections, White concludes his account of Mettler's work with an emphasis on "audiovisual spontaneity" (47). White quotes a 1962 Umberto Eco piece on the late Michelangelo Antonioni's debt in *L'avventura* (1960) and *La notte* (1961) to the new improvisational aesthetics of live, on-location TV: "for a very long time nothing may happen, and the camera remains focused on the curve of a road waiting for the sudden appearance of the first runner, or, weary, wanders to the façades of the surrounding houses or the expectant faces of the spectators, for no other reason than this is the way things go, and there is nothing else to do but wait" (48). So, along the curving road of the avant-garde, one of its emissaries—rave-friendly "Teledivinitry"—finds, surprisingly by way of television, a route back after all to cinema and more precisely to what we still with reason call "art cinema." Which is to say the filmmaking not only of Antonioni, but also of Brakhage and Sternberg.

Rob White